

# SIX ESSAYS

BY

JOHN T. EMMETT



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ON

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*THE STATE OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE.*

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, April, 1872.

II.

*THE HOPE OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE.*

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, Oct., 1874.

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THE BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, April, 1879.

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THE BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, October, 1875.

BY

JOHN T. EMMETT

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THE STATE  
OF  
ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE.

BY  
JOHN T. EMMETT.

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THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, APRIL, 1872.

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“All degrees

*And shapes of spurious fame and shortlived praise  
Here sat in state, and fed with daily alms  
Retainers won away from solid good ;  
And here was Labour, his own bondslave ; Hope  
That never set the pains against the prize ;  
Honour misplaced and Dignity astray,  
(The idol weak as the idolater),  
And Decency and Custom starving Truth,  
And blind Authority beating with his staff  
The child that might have led him ; Emptiness  
Followed as of good omen, and meek Worth  
Left to herself unheard of and unknown.”*

WORDSWORTH.

“Let a man forsake a decent craft that he may pursue the gentilities of a profession to which nature never called him, and his religion will infallibly be the worship of blessed chance, which he will believe in as the mighty creator of success. The evil principle deprecated in that religion is the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its kind.”

SILAS MARNER.

# THE STATE OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE.

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FOR several years past the public mind has been prepared for an earnest endeavour to obtain a decent building for our courts of law. The attempt has now been strenuously made; time, money, abundant zeal, and superabundant counsel, have been lavishly expended. Never, perhaps, in the history of art has so much general intelligence been brought to the preparation for a single work; never has there been a more unanimous desire that the best thing possible, or even impossible, should be discovered and achieved; and yet the main result has been dissatisfaction and elaborate failure. Our most conspicuous Gothic architects sent in designs, whose exhibition served as a severe but salutary lesson to the art-loving public. Their unreasoning confidence in names of notoriety was rudely shaken; it became evident that this notoriety had its foundation in anything rather than good work, and that a dozen architects could not only make the competition one of mere extravagance, but had openly assumed the incapacity of their judges. The exhibition was melancholy and hopeless, almost without exception — an artistic *inferno* and a national disgrace.

In Mr. Street's design, which has been finally selected, the façade or elevation on the frontage towards the Strand is some five hundred feet long, which is about the length of

St. Paul's, and other of our large cathedrals, there is, consequently, no difficulty on the score of dimensions; the rooms are not of any special importance, and there is no apparent reason why the front should not have been treated in a simple and dignified manner. The roof, however, is broken into fourteen distinct compartments, with as many angles in the line of wall; producing an infirmity of outline that has given the front a feeble, dislocated look. The windows also are pretentious, mean, and ugly, the large pinnacles are useless and absurd, and the tower is not worth the cost of its foundations.

Here, then, there is obvious failure; but although simplicity and dignity and power have thus been diligently wasted, they would be regained if all the lines of roof and wall were made continuous except where they are interrupted by the gable of the central hall, which might be brought well forward to the front, and by the angle tower. The octagon staircases could be changed in form with no loss of convenience; a range of dormer windows might decorate the roof, and an arcade of shops would enliven the ground-floor frontage abutting on the Strand; the pinnacles and carved bands might be omitted with advantage in every way; and if Mr. Street is unable to design windows and tracery in the graceful manner of the fourteenth century, an advertisement in 'The Builder' will discover plenty of help for him in this rather important branch of Gothic art. Many a professional reputation has been made by the assistance of some clever drawing clerk, whose name, however, does not transpire beyond the narrow range of 'office' notoriety. A successful railway jobber of pushing habits, or a bankrupt builder with efficient patronage, may do wonders as an architect by a judicious expenditure in office salaries.

Now, what we have proposed for Mr. Street's design is, in fact, extinction; but there is small blame to Mr. Street for this necessity. He, like the rest of his class, has to please

or satisfy a public who concerning building art are lamentably ignorant. Accustomed throughout life to the most hideous extent of building that the world ever saw, regarding any knowledge of the house in which he lives as vulgar, fit only for low builders and for fellows of the baser sort, the average Londoner, in presence of the art that most affects his comfort and his life, is supercilious, conceited, and debased. Of the architectural aspect of the streets he has no intelligent opinion, nor even any clear perception; but with Wigmore-street he feels at home: the Regent's-park and Grosvenor-place he thinks are 'fine,' and the Museum in Great Russell-street, he is instructed, 'is a masterpiece.'

This, then, is the quality of mind that an architect who would be successful must attempt to satisfy; and, if he has experience and knowledge of the world, he naturally adopts the most direct and easiest method to command success. Prettiness is, of course, essential; what else is architecture for, if not to be pretty? Of the shortcoming and offensiveness of his design he may be perfectly, or possibly imperfectly, aware; but he overlays it with ornament, and encrusts it with carving, until the whole is pronounced to be beautiful. In this great requisite of modern architecture Mr. Street fails; he has no sense of prettiness, and he substitutes confusion; he was afraid of simple expressiveness, and he has become incoherent. He has grievously erred, not, however, from negligence or want of will, but merely from natural incapacity. Every man is not a born confectioner; and if his work fails through subjection to the influence of a depraved and vulgar 'public taste,' which yet he is unable to satisfy, Mr. Street can hardly be reproached for this unfortunate result.

But there is also the class of *dilettanti* who have to be appeased. These are the people that know all about styles and dates; travelled men, sketchers, ecclesiologists, and the like. Among these Mr. Street appears to have fallen, and to

have found their patronage to be as damaging by its priggishness, as the demands of the public are from their ignorance. The influence of this class is occasionally useful, but many a well-meaning architect must have found himself grievously burdened by their equivocal patronage, which becomes a weight quite as often as a support ; and Mr. Street has been much injured by their awkward advocacy. The knowing talk about 'skylines' and 'fenestration,' and all the cant of the literary amateur, is the adopted language of a certain class of newspapers and magazines. Such 'knowingness' is, however, only that half-knowledge 'that puffeth up' ; and its effect is evident in Mr. Street's more public buildings, which seem either to be paralysed by some intrusive clerical infirmity, or to be designed expressly for some sacerdotal epicene. Mr. Street is not the only sufferer from this cause ; a large number of our recent churches evince the pernicious influence of this emasculated tone of criticism, and are made mere specimens of the transient ecclesiastical fashion, instead of permanent monuments of art.

The true artist, however, rejects all these influences, and works to please or satisfy himself, regardless of the public or of patrons. That such is the only sound method of practice may be clearly shown by multiplied examples of success and failure due to the observance or neglect of this distinctly fundamental law of good design.

In the remarks which we think it our duty to make on the present state of English architecture, we are influenced by no personal or professional prejudice or feeling ; and, to avoid at first all questions about styles and schools, we will begin by noticing the works of modern engineers. Rennie and Telford had little or no need to regard the opinion of the public ; they had the intelligent support and generous confidence of a few men of influence and good sense ; and, as the result, the Menai and London bridges are two of the most simple, dignified, and noble buildings in the world. Times

and methods have, however, changed : now we have competitive designs for bridges ; and our engineers, as men of business, being careful to keep safely on the highway to professional success, most readily abandon all reserve, and start on a career of extravagance and pretence.

Their success may be held to be their justification ; with Blackfriars Bridge, for instance, we find the public thoroughly well pleased, though the design is really a wonder of depravity. Polished granite columns of amazing thickness, with carved capitals of stupendous weight, all made to give shop-room to an apple-woman, or a convenient platform for a suicide ; the parapet, a fiddle-faddle of pretty cast-iron arcading, out of scale with the columns, incongruous with the capitals, and quite unsuited for a work that should be simply grand in its usefulness ; and, at each corner of the bridge, a huge block of masonry *à propos* of nothing, a well known evidence of desperate imbecility.

On the Embankment, these big blocks, which were perhaps suggested by the late John Martin's 'architectural' vagaries, have been freely used ; so that, from the river, it would seem that they were the chief object for which the embankment wall was made. The lamp-posts, also, are a senseless jumble of 'objects,' from colossal and very ugly fishes to miniature and meaningless faces, thrown together without reference to scale or order of any kind. The garden railing is little better than the lamp-posts, and is even more vexatious from its greater quantity. The comparatively simple railing round Hyde Park is far preferable to this pretty panelling, which will completely hide the flowers when they grow, and which is in curious contrast with the heavy granite parapet and piers along the front retaining wall. If this parapet, with its huge pedestals, a waste of space and money, were all cleared away, and replaced by a simple, stout iron railing and a narrow sloping bank of grass, the true effect of an embankment would be gained ; both road and river would

appear considerably wider, and the view along the curve of the embankment would be unobstructed; the Thames would then be visible to those who, walking on the quay, can now see little but the smoke of passing steamboats, and the view on each side from the river might become more cheerful, less suggestive of canal locks where 'drags are in constant readiness; ' the river would look beautiful instead of ghastly, and the saving in hewn granite would be sufficient to provide for every care and protection that could be required. On the outer face of these obstructive piers there are large metal lions' heads and rings; they look like door-knockers; but, supposing they are meant for mooring-rings, they should be solidly fixed down in the wall, below high-water line, instead of being hung high up in the light parapet, and out of reach. As mere ornaments they are childish; their large size diminishes the apparent scale of the work to which they are attached, and their unmeaning repetition every thirty yards for some six miles will be a weary monument of the dulness of the engineer who designed them.

At Westminster Bridge, the engineer has spent his energy upon another gimerack pattern of a lamp-post, and on an imitation in cast-iron of Gothic masonry. While so distracted from his special engineering duty, he has committed a very unworkmanlike blunder. The fascia of each arch is broader than the fascia of the bridge, which stretches over all the arches. As these two fascias intersect along the upper portion of each arch, the greater width is made to stop abruptly, and the narrower width continues. Thus the arches all appear to be shorn off and crippled, a suggestion of constructive instability and weakness, which the remarkable vibration of the roadway seems to justify. Such are the absurdities that our proverbially 'practical' engineers commit when they pretend to gratify the public 'taste.' Let us now turn to the architects.

In the immediate neighbourhood is the railing round the

grass-plats in Palace Yard ; bad in every possible way, and very manifestly so in the extravagance of such an expenditure for the preservation of a few Tom Thumb geraniums. Architects and engineers, it seems, have yet to learn that the object of a fence is not to distract attention from, but to be subordinate, as a protection, to that which it encloses. The new arcade or cloister is a similar mistake, with a terrible look of permanence about it. The railings we may hope to clear away, but this deformity in stone is too substantial to be easily removed. It happened that the base for a tall building was remarkably high ; and in making the addition of a very short building, this very high and heavy base was continued as part of the new design. Perhaps ineptitude could do no worse ; and if our readers will take a few dimensions, showing the proportion of area to pier, and will compare these with the cloisters at Westminster Abbey close by, they will be able to understand the value of names and things in the architectural profession.

Of St. Thomas's Hospital it is scarcely fair to speak in this category of public favourites, or candidates for public approval. Public opinion is divided on its merits ; and probably its designer, now that he discovers what his drawings really meant, may in this respect agree with the public. About the Midland Railway Terminus, however, there are not two opinions ; here the 'public taste' has been exactly suited, and every kind of architectural decoration has been made thoroughly common and unclean ; the building, inside and out, is covered with ornament, and there is polished marble enough to furnish a Cathedral ; the very parapet of the cab road is panelled and perforated, at a cost that would have supplied foot-warmers to all trains for years to come. This monument of confectionery is a fair specimen of the result of competition among architects for the approval of judges whom they know to be incompetent. The 'Midland' directors are able administrators of the railway business, and probably of their own ; but

there is little evidence that they were qualified in any way to decide upon the respective merits of the competitors, or to select a design to be built in an important Metropolitan thoroughfare. Were any of these gentlemen completely furnished with the necessary knowledge? and if not, how could their ignorance become efficient in its stead?—are questions that, in the interests of the ‘art,’ about which they are so very careful when their own interests are specially involved, the competing architects ought, as a condition precedent, to have had satisfactorily answered. Judging by the building, however, we imagine that a very different course was taken; and, in the successful design at any rate, the noble art of building has been treated as a mere trade advertisement; showy and expensive, it will, for the present, be a striking contrast with its adjoining neighbour. The Great Northern Terminus is not graceful, but it is simple, characteristic, and true, no one would mistake its nature or its use. The Midland front is inconsistent in its style, and meretricious in detail, a piece of common art manufacture, that makes the Great Northern front appear by contrast almost charming. There is no relief or quiet in any part of the work; the eye is constantly troubled and tormented, and the mechanical patterns follow one another with such rapidity and perseverance, that the mind becomes irritated where it ought to be gratified, and goaded to criticism where it should be led calmly to approve. There is here a complete travesty of noble associations, and not the slightest care to save these from a sordid contact; an elaboration that might be suitable for a Chapter-house, or a Cathedral choir, is used as an ‘advertising medium’ for bagmen’s bedrooms and the costly discomforts of a terminus hotel; and the architect is thus a mere expensive rival of the company’s head cook in catering for the low enjoyments of the travelling crowd. To be consistent, the directors should not confine their expression of artistic feeling to their station buildings only; all their porters might be

dressed as javelin men, their guards as beefeaters, and their station - masters might assume the picturesque attire of Garter-king-at-arms ; their carriages might be copied from the Lord Mayor's show, and even their large locomotive wheels might imitate the Gothic window near their terminus at York. These things, however, will eventually come ; the water tank is moulded in the Gothic style.

Yet who is to blame for all this ? In all this demonstration the directors meant, no doubt, extremely well ; they were but in a state of childish and presumptuous ignorance ; and if the architect were held responsible, he would most probably refer to the accepted system. Of course the work is mechanical and unimaginative ; but is anything superior to this required ? How many of the public are there who can judge efficiently of work, or who could with discerning sympathy appreciate artistic workmen ? We, indeed, have now no cultivated working men as 'masters,' such as Fischer was at Nuremberg and Anton at Vienna ; enterprising railway speculators, therefore, must put up with what 'the genius of the age' supplies—an eminent architect, 'art manufacture,' and sufficient money.

Here, then, has been Mr. Street's instructive lesson and example ; we are not dealing with an art that ennobles, but with a profession that pleases, or is supposed to please. And now that so much nonsense has been written about 'Temples of Themis' and 'Palaces of Justice,' architects of common sense may hardly find the courage to assert that Courts of Law should be quite plain and simple in their architectural appearance. Law personified is of majestic presence, and were we engaged in preparing a palace for an ideal representative of justice, perhaps our highest efforts would fail to produce a fit abode for so august a sovereignty. But we are now concerned with no ideal, but with a very homely common law, and with precarious Chancery practice ; we are providing a place for the settlement of miserable disputes,

originating in folly or in knavery, or in the very imperfection of the law, or it may be in all three combined. It requires but a glance around a Court to see that a grave, not to say a sad simplicity of style, will best reflect the mental, moral, and material condition of those whose interests compel their unwilling attendance. Comfort, cleanliness, tranquility, and air, are of course essential; but what is called grandeur or magnificence is merely impertinent. It might serve to gape at for a day or two, and then it would be either forgotten or offensive; the Court would not be ennobled, but the grandeur, or its imitation, would be thrown away or brought into contempt. In fact, the association of Courts of Law seems to be rather with lunatic asylums and debtors' prisons, than with palaces and temples; and, taking a middle position between the two groups, a style neither grandiose nor mean, splendid nor sad, but a happy medium of decent plainness, seems to be the most satisfactory and appropriate.

The Strand front of the building, seventy feet high to the eaves, besides the roofs and gables and a lofty angle tower, would be effective if designed with simplicity of outline, variety of detail, and rhythm of parts, and with such abundant diversity and appropriate distinction in the windows and their tracery as may be necessary to give characteristic expression to the several rooms. The lower part of the front along the Strand should be constructed to continue the street line of shops, since the intrusion of an isolated building would destroy or injure the commercial aspect of a main, business street, and would depreciate the neighbouring property. The slightest observation will suffice to show that if the lower arches of Somerset House were treated in the same way as those round the Royal Exchange, the Strand would gain exceedingly in picturesque effect and business value; and the building, though remaining a dark cloud above the street, would have a golden lining. Besides, it should be borne in mind that the Strand

frontage of Somerset House is only one-fifth of the entire length of the building, or of these new Courts of Law.

The design for the Law Courts is, however, but of transient interest in comparison with the popular ignorance of building art which the competition has brought to light; and the cause of this ignorance we shall now endeavour to explain.

The fact is that we have at present no true building art; it is entirely lost; but in its stead we have what is absurdly called the profession of architecture, which, as it pretends to the practice of art, is in the nature of an imposture. The essence of art is handiwork; not the preparations for work, such as the 'designs' and drawings compiled by the architect, his 'assistant,' or his numerous 'staff,' any more than is the scaffolding erected by the Irish labourer. It is not the painstaking of an imitator, the dull labour of a draughtsman, nor the drudgery of an artisan; but, wholly different, it is the grateful practice of instructed, free, self-guided working men: the conjoint operation of both head and hand. There is no neglect of due subordination or of proper leadership, nor a refusal of mechanical assistance or of any worthy tools, but there is constant play and freedom for the intellect and the imagination, for the well-trained hand and thoroughly instructed mind. The best buildings of all ages have been made, not by professional 'designers' and their drawing clerks, but by the labouring handcraftsmen. The chief buildings of the last three centuries in Europe have been designed by pseudo-architects. They are sometimes scholarly, imposing, and expensive; and of late they have been pretty, vulgar, childish, or grim, as the prevailing fashion, and as individual fancy have required.

At present there is no help for this substitution of the imposture for the reality. In old times, people built on their own freeholds, modestly, with honest intention, and with the prospect of endurance; they employed free workmen whose delight was in the product of their own skill, and

with whom the employer was in constant and familiar intercourse. The style of work was national, and as well understood by the people as their own language ; people no more thought of building in 'styles' than of talking in 'tongues.' The master - mason could build simply for a cottage, or gloriously for a cathedral ; his perfect familiarity with his work, his good sense and cultivated imagination, were his only guides, his sole assistants were his perfectly instructed fellow craftsmen ; and to these plain workmen, whom our modern architects are very proud to imitate, we are indebted for the chief remaining glories of the middle ages. The system was universal until the classic revival ; the Art of Egypt, of Greece, of Nineveh, and of Hindustan, was evidently in each case genuine, the product of the working men. No architect, as we now understand the word, would have designed the Parthenon, with its variety of sculpture and its subtlety of curve ; indeed, the need and value of these curves would never have been discovered by an office draughtsman ; and their invention and adoption show that the Athenian builder was a labouring artisan. Ictinus, the so-called architect, was a cunning master-builder (*σοφὸς οἰκοδόμος*), the *working* head of a band of *working* men. The same is unquestionably true of Phidias and his helpers ; their carvings are clearly spontaneous, not imitative, second-hand work. The metopes, some of them archaic in style, prove that, even under the prince of sculptors, the old carvers held their own ; the individuality of the workman was maintained and was distinctly manifested in his work, and the Pan-athenaic frieze appears to be the direct expression of the chisel, without even previous modeling ; the very failings and imperfections of the buildings on the Acropolis revealing the habitual independence of the working men. Of course there was subordination, but the subordination was all within the workman class ; and in our own old churches and cathedrals the designs were all set out by master-workmen. There is, in

fact, but little *record* of design at all ; the work, as we are told, was 'built,' and that included what is now called the design. The constant activity of thought, indicated in slight modifications of plan or detail, the quaint and often exquisite winding up of portions of the work, the natural and spontaneous outgrowth of the carving, the boldness and even coarseness of idea and treatment, in conjunction with surprising delicacy and tenderness of feeling, reveal the artist and the workman in a single mind.

But now instead of a class of noble working-men, we have the 'architectural profession,' a number of soft-handed 'gentlemen' who may or may not be able to make sketches, or 'plans and elevations,' but who at any rate can get them made—who prepare what are called 'designs' in any 'style,' and submit them to people ignorant of every style for their approval and acceptance. Certainly this popular approval is not gained by real merit, as members of many a building committee can testify ; and it argues little for the business sagacity, with which professional men are sufficiently endowed, if the design is not made carefully bad, should the employers' whim demand the effort. We remember to have seen this method exemplified in a certain competition with very marked success. Nor is this designing to order the only evil of the system ; the profession is, in fact, a mere trade. Designs are made and sent to any distance, to be contracted for by any speculator, who will make money of them if nothing else, and to be built by mere slaves of workmen, who will make sad work of them if they can. The architect's superintendence, instead of being constant and careful, and in a sense almost affectionate and paternal, is scanty, heartless, perfunctory, or almost wanting. How, then, will the building fare ? The only hope would be in the 'clerk of the works ;' but he is a sort of stepfather or trustee, who has to adhere strictly to the drawings. There is, consequently, no motive for expression in the work, and none of that 'handling,' the

evidence of the artist's presence and effort, which is as valuable in building as it is admitted to be in painting or in sculpture. Nothing is more to be regretted in the so-called restorations at our ecclesiastical buildings than the total loss of this pervading evidence of the workman's mind.

This customary trading in designs has now become absurd. Architects are so little like 'chief builders,' that they almost cease to be builders at all; and there are ludicrous but authenticated tales of their ignorance of their own nominal works. One large building, on which the 'commission' amounted to some thousands of pounds, is said to have been visited by the architect for less than half an hour during its entire construction. We have recently seen the statement, that nearly sixty 'restorations' have been superintended for an 'eminent architect' by one clerk of works. Let our readers translate this fact into the sphere of any other profession, and imagine the Attorney-General, for instance, composing speeches for every circuit in the calendar, and employing law stationers to recite them; or an archbishop 'designing' sermons on commission, with an additional allowance for 'pulpit clerks' to deliver them; or a surgeon receiving heavy fees for operations to be performed, and handing over the necessary 'drawings and specifications' to various country chemists and druggists, and they will be enabled to understand something of the present practice of the architectural profession. It is quite time that the system should be exposed, condemned, and thoroughly exploded. The public should be taught to understand that the names of 'eminent persons' in the profession are delusions, and that they are themselves the sufferers by the continuance of a deceptive custom, and are deeply interested in its abolition.

There is another remarkable contrast between the old method and the new. On examining any of our ancient buildings, it soon becomes evident that, however commanding and impressive the work may be to the beholder, it was

not so to the builder. His power of intellect and imagination could demonstrate itself in stone, and overcome those minds that had less discernment of artistic masonry and less comprehensiveness of architectural thought. But his own mind was in no subjective condition. He had no awe of, and little reverence for, his work ; he was a 'master-worker' and a creator, or an associated 'chief master' and superintendent of 'creators ;' and his workman's art was a delight to him, the outward form and expression of an active and imaginative mind that might be strongly sympathetic, full of joy, and nobly serious, but never weak or selfish, superstitious or debased. Nothing can be more in contrast with all this than its delusive modern counterpart ; in which there is no evidence of delight or power, but only that the architect was eager for applause, and careful for increased employment ; or else that his mind being weakened by subordination to a vain imagination, he became a feeble worshipper of his own poor work.

The interiors of most of the high ritual churches are marked by the latter peculiarity, and some clear evidence of mental weakness is, in these 'impressive' places, seldom wanting. The font at St. Alban's, Holborn, for instance, which has been 'designed' with much care, would be beneath the genius of a manufacturer of Tonbridge ware ; and the speckled and spotted coloured brick patterns on the walls, here and at All-Saints', Margaret Street, are precise reminiscences of a favourite nursery toy. The degradation is, however, more particularly manifested in the 'reredos,' not the old eastern choir-screens, which are sometimes so called, but a comparatively recent importation from abroad, an un-English innovation, favoured as giving an opportunity for a much-desired patch of prettiness, or the exhibition of such superfluous folly as is not entirely used up in other details of the church, and which gives the communion table the appearance of a quasi-medieval sideboard.

The old builder had not heard anything about the 'pro-

‘fession’ of art; he was a simple master workman, and would make the plan, arrange the elevations, and be in fact the foreman of the work. The general requirements might of course be suggested to him, but he and his fellow workmen alone contrived the building and wrought out its various details. In those times, when handcraftsmen were acknowledged to have brains, and always used them, building was not recognised as a “fine art,” but only as a common and very noble *work*. These mere handcraftsmen were, however, far above the level of our modern architects; they were true artists of the highest culture and of powerful mind, with perfect faculty of architectural expression in their workman’s tongue—a language that for purity, variety, and dignity, has never been excelled, and which all men, in those days, understood. The enormous quantity of building during the fourteenth century, compared with the then small population of the country, shows that the Englishman of that day must have been at least as well informed on the merits of a house as his posterity pretend to be about the favourites for the coming Derby. In those days the working men would make the building of a parish church, or the more gradual progress of a great cathedral, their delight and glory; in our time we have those most superior persons of ‘the valuable middle class,’ who are ‘not working people,’ and whose crown of rejoicing is the Goodwood or the Ascot Cup, but who are utterly ignorant about the construction and architecture of their own dwellings, and even have a pitiful conceit of their gregarious ignorance.

In the days of art the mason did not work in mental solitude, under a greedy contractor and a driving foreman, nor was he guided by a ‘graphic’ architect, half ignorant and wholly incapable, nor superintended (*overlooked* would be the better word) by a committee destitute alike of knowledge and discernment. He worked in regulated freedom and intelligent association with his fellow-workmen, who at once would com-

prehend and properly appreciate each thought and fancy as the chisel rapidly expressed it. The man's circumstances were entirely sympathetic; he had not to submit mendacious competition drawings to be gazed at by a dozen dolts in architecture, who unfortunately happened to be wealthy or well placed; but he was judged entirely by his works, and his efficient judges were his peers. His work was social, the expression of the sentiments and habits of the people. Having to adopt no 'style,' his own homely language was sufficient to insure the perfect ease and wonderful variety which charm us in old work; and though the form of utterance is always changing, there is nothing incoherent or obscure. There is, moreover, no vanity in the work; and though the workman is direct and simple in the expression of his active mind, he does not think about himself, nor yet at all about the 'public taste'; he has no dull care to be correct; but on the contrary, he gives such new and vigorous development of thought and detail that the buildings seem to live; and, in an often undetected way, we find our sympathies engaged and our interest excited even by the waywardness and seeming errors of the workman. There is no endeavour after ornament or architectural show: nothing is more remarkable than the way in which opportunities for decoration are neglected; the builder goes on working in the quietest way until he has a worthy idea to express, and then he does it in a simple and unconscious manner. The most graceful thoughts are often thrown into the work as if they were mere common-places; there is no painful striving to make the greatest possible display with the money and material: the man and his associations are the real stamp and the informing spirit of the work. How many a village church can be remembered, without even an external plinth to its rude, unsophisticated walling, with a stumpy and 'un-graceful' though most sensible and useful tower, but with scarcely any ornament about the building, until in some un-

obtrusive doorway or aisle window we find the gem of thought that gives dignity and refinement to the entire work. It is true that in some buildings this simplicity of method partly fails ; but as a rule, the ornament with which, in later times, the work became mechanically overlaid is evidence that something in the nature of a modern architect is causing the artistic aberration. William of Wykeham seems to have been a great transgressor in this way.

In total contrast with what we have thus described is a very marked and nearly universal characteristic of our modern churches. Whether they are 'high' or 'low,' correct or impure, 'original' or eclectic, there is in them a constant straining for effect ; it seems as if each architect thought that he would have no other opportunity, and must seize the present chance to make his mark, and light his pound of candles all at once. There is a want of dignity and repose about the work, a consciousness that it will be looked at, and a vain hope that it will be admired, leading to a sort of architectural posture-making and display, that no affectation of propriety, and even of asceticism, will save from a charge of meretricious vanity. Now all this is very unbecoming and inconsistent ; a church requires nothing of the kind ; it is in fact a very ordinary, common-place building, and only particularly remarkable now because domestic architecture is so excessively debased. In olden times, the church was as a rule rather plain in comparison with the surrounding houses. Little of the old domestic urban architecture remains ; but careful search and examination will show that in most cities there was in proportion more expenditure on house than on church decoration. Crosby Hall, and the adjacent churches of St. Ethelburga and St. Helen's, may serve as a convenient, though perhaps not quite a fair illustration ; and at Canterbury and Chester, Lincoln and Exeter, examples might be multiplied. Churches were then known of all men as houses of prayer, and were appropriately humble and unpretending,

and even almost obscure. Of public buildings, churches are the most numerous, unless indeed public-houses are included in the category; and as there is so little necessary difference in their plans, there need be none of that agonizing superfluity of contrivance and detail that we are compelled to observe and painfully to regret. We know all about the sacred character of the building, the superlativeness of its requirements, and the 'Lamp of Sacrifice'; but we say that the sanctity of its dedication, and the dignity of its character, would be best demonstrated and maintained by the abandonment of all the frippery and excess of detail that architects find it to be their business to display. There is no 'sacrifice' in this elaboration; its removal would in fact be a purification; the real sacrifice is the offering, genuine, hearty, intelligent, and refined, of the simple working man. The artistic mason, being serious and unselfish in his work, is generally satisfied with the mild excitement of his ordinary care, and, working in his homely, modest way, gains all the variety and change he needs in those occasional hours of imaginative and ornamental work which give the needful and appropriate enrichment to his simple building.

This method is impossible for architects; they have none of this healthy mechanical plodding; their business is not to build but to make drawings; the work that would occupy a mason several weeks or months is indicated by perhaps a single line, or at most a few hours' labour at the drawing-board. As the designer feels and knows, his help for sound and simple work is not required, and so to give the public some excuse for his professional existence, he must needs employ his pencil and bow-pencil pretty freely, until at last it becomes impossible to get the architect and his cleverness, or want of it, out of one's mind, and the building is permanently desecrated.

The church of St. James the Less, at Westminster, has been greatly praised for its decorative work, though it really

is but a baby-house. Its particoloured tower is built with polished marbles up amongst the clouds, and of ungainly brickwork level with the eye. Its preposterous ironwork, designed by an architect and manufactured by a mechanic, is so disproportioned as to be absurd, and is quite incongruous with the mean walling that it screens. The interior, chequered all over with bits of colour, is not the serious effort of a man, but mere effeminacy and child's play, giving the same wide-mouthed pleasure as a trick of sleight of hand. The decorations of the roof are for the most part invisible. The mental debasement which we have already referred to has in this and many other churches shown itself by making them what children call 'a place for bogies.' There is a great deal of nonsensical scorn of those who object to Gothic work that it is dark and gloomy ; but these childish church architects are the cause, and their works are a justification of this at first sight very reasonable objection. At St. James's the aisle windows are mere slits in the wall, not to admit daylight, evidently, but to show small panels of indifferent stained glass, which cause this dismal darkness and which serve to mystify the weakheaded persons for whom such work is sympathetically designed. At St. Michael's, Cornhill, is another of these follies, but there the nonsense was carried so far, that some glazed coal plates have been inserted in the aisle ceilings to light the people, the windows having been given over to the glass painter.

There is no objection to coloured decoration when properly done, and judiciously applied, the work of an intelligent and skilful workman. But this spurious work, designed by draughtsmen, and worked in or stencilled on by drudges, is wholly inartistic, and no assumed correctness or consistency of style can justify its character. The same remark applies to decorative mason's work and carving ; these may be perfectly correct in style, and accurate in finish, and still be so mechanical and lifeless as to be repulsive, and a mere de-

facement of the building ; or they may be rude in workmanship, coarse in material and detail, and even incorrect in style, and yet be found unspeakably delightful. The old builders were true working men, of simple and original ideas, which they expressed abundantly in work ; and by their combination of artistic habit and intelligence they constantly developed novelty while still maintaining purity of style. Now we have men who imitate the old details, but being destitute of true creative workman's thought, have nothing to express.

In carvers' work there has been, on the whole, less degradation of the workmen ; hence the value of the monuments at Westminster, in which we have a perfect history of our modern sculpture. Frequent proposals have been made by architects and connoisseurs to have the recent modern works removed, so that the church might be entirely 'restored' ; but many of these sculpturesque intruders are of genuine and noble workmanship, and so become in character and fact consistent and appropriate additions to the building, which is itself of gradual construction, and in varied and successive dialects of art. Among such valuable works the choir-screen, reredos, pulpit, and communion table are not to be included ; these are particularly weak and *jejune* specimens of the dull clerkmanship that architects of eminence live to supply, and thus are mere expensive lumber. When compared with the old gateway to the Chapter-house or the De Valence tomb, their worthlessness is very clear. We therefore cannot yet presume to touch our monumental buildings, except most carefully to uphold them. When we have men again to do the work as well as to design it, we may venture, but till then it would be safe to wait.

It is quite time that the public should understand what has been going on under the name of church and cathedral restoration. The architects of the present day are not at all reticent about the 'improvements' done by their equally eminent predecessors, and the ghosts of Wyatt and Nash

must have a sad time of it; but never has there been such wanton destruction of the historic associations and genuine artistic character and expression of our ancient buildings as they have suffered during the last thirty years. The game began with the Temple Church; and, as an historical and venerable relic, the building is destroyed. The exterior is new, the interior is scraped, and polished, and painted, and glazed, until it would puzzle an archæologist to put his finger on anything that the Knights Templar actually saw. Then there came the inevitable 'reredos,' and the 'consistently 'designed' pewing, which we were told was in 'good taste'; and thus an interesting monument is turned into a fashionable church. If the Benchers wanted a luxurious and showy chapel, they could very well have built one for themselves, and have left the old Templars and their historic chapel quietly alone.

The barbarous propensity to scrape and daub spread like a disease among the clergy, who in their delusion studied Rickman and Pugin, Whewell and Britton, and intended to be learned in 'the styles.' Their desire was partly good, and manifestly they had no want of zeal; but from the influence of their bookish education, and of the common ignorant contempt of handicraft, they failed to see that the mere literary study of an art must of necessity be defective, and that, to avoid the dangers of a little knowledge, they should have sought the necessary aid, not of an architect, who was in art no better than themselves, but of the village mason, carpenter, and smith. Had this been generally done, and had the working men been cordially led to join in careful study of the neighbouring relics of the olden time, they would have soon become the 'masters' of their work; and thus, instead of the delusive system or 'profession,' under which we suffer without hope, there would have been revived a genuine and noble 'practice' of the building arts by a great class or school of cultivated workmen.

Nor would architecture alone have been the gainer. The

spread of intelligence among the workmen would have had other great results. There would have been no need then for 'celebrated' engineers or 'eminent' contractors. Our railways, though they look so big, and are, like other things, impressive from their length, when quietly considered mile by mile are for the most part very commonplace affairs, little above hedging and ditching; they seldom require more constructive ability than a ten-roomed house or than a parish church arcade, and so they might have well been undertaken in detail by local working men. By this method hundreds of millions of railway capital would have been saved, and the country would have had a perfectly developed system of judiciously-constructed lines. George Stephenson was a working man, and it was not he that made the costly blunder of the Britannia Bridge, or the lavish experimental waste of the Great Western Railway.

The Gothic movement soon became involved in the low rivalries and struggles of contending parties in the Church; and, without sturdy power of its own, founded on the broad influence of common knowledge and popular opinion, it sank into subserviency, and became for many years a means or cause of grievous injury and evil. It conduced far more to clerical conceit than to artistic architectural improvement, and became the special opportunity for social and professional vanity and display. Ecclesiastics pretended to be ecclesiologists, became knowing about metal-work, that it should be wrought and not cast, and wood-work, that it should be 'stopped' rather than 'mitred'; not discerning that of all metal-work none is so debased as the modern trade specimens of wrought iron and brass. They fell then into the hands of ecclesiastical decorators and furniture dealers; and, having been plundered and imposed upon in every way, they are still blind to their losses, and proud of their work, and have yet to make the unpleasant discovery that they have spent their substance on mere ecclesiastical toy-shops.

Of course there have been architects employed ; but this, as the reader is aware, is not an assurance of hope. We have already endeavoured to describe the class, and we now venture to say that drawing-masters and composers have for the last three hundred years been hindrances to architectural art. They are, as we have shown, a mere delusive fashion ; and their works are like them. Medieval buildings are fit subjects for our artists' most elaborate drawings ; modern buildings are but imitations of the drawing-masters' imitative draughtsmanship. If we examine a great work of medieval times, the Abbey Church at Westminster for instance, we shall find the workmanship entirely genuine, free from sham, and every stone alive with energy of power or beauty of enrichment. Such a building is in its construction and detail distinctly the expression and result of human thought and feeling ; so that even when in ruin it is charming. Its Renaissance rivals can have no such hope in dissolution ; being a mere manufacture, they are in the same category with machine-made lace and cotton prints, and often vastly their inferiors in design. There is, possibly, no better, as there can be no more melancholy test of the value of artistic work, than this of architectural ruin and decay ; and if, without destruction, we mentally apply the idea, we shall find that buildings, and other works, begin to arrange themselves in an order of merit far different from what has lately been accepted. The details of the new India Office, for example, never would be treasured in an architectural museum ; the 'Vulcanian' style of our iron age would suffer grievous degradation, and the Crystal Palace itself might find its precedence disputed by an old piece of ordnance or the dilapidated framework of a worn-out parasol.

Architecture has throughout our history been a favourite work and demonstration of the common people ; and the lavish richness, chastened fancy, and perfect form of the details, moulded and carved, of Early English work, are per-

haps the most beautiful memorial of the spirit and happiness of a nation that the history of art can show. Under the Edwards the genius of the people became completely manifested, and the England of that time reached the climax of vernacular and homely and majestic architecture in the history of the world. Egypt, Greece, and Rome, each had its peculiar glory, but they had neither a climate that compelled, nor a building material that readily lent itself to, the development of a domestic architecture such as ours, which was, in fact, the 'prentice work for all the noble monuments that once adorned the land. These had a character remarkably distinct from the coëval works of art in France and Germany and Italy and Spain, a character most evidently due to the greater influence of our domestic buildings.

The working men were then quite free; they lived and worked among intelligent and sympathising friends. The clergy, who were the main dispensers of the surplus income of the nation in the arts of peace, were men of the people, and they built as homely Englishmen, in a most dignified and manly way. Even when, in the course of the fifteenth century, commercial wealth became a more predominating influence, and the artisan was gradually sinking as the man of trade rose higher in the financial world, the workman's style was still maintained; until at last the tide of luxury swept art away, and the Italian fashion took its place. Yet Castle Howard, Whitehall Chapel, Greenwich Hospital, and more recently the Travellers' Club and the Sun Fire Office, show that although the genius of the people has been grievously neglected, there has been a picturesque artistic spirit still among us capable of bringing architectural good out of so much evil. But now we have sunk down so low that a work of such painful incapacity as the London University building has been commended by the leaders of the profession; and the Government have presented to us, on the Piccadilly side of Burlington House, the most contemp-

tible public building that the architectural profession has achieved.

It is necessary to bear in mind that medieval building and modern architecture are two essentially and practically different things. The one was wholly workmen's work, the other is but a fine name adopted by a spurious—we had almost said—a quack profession. The modern 'chief builder' is, in fact, no builder at all, but only a drawing-master: the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, and the Italian and Western 'Goths' were cultivated workmen, who invented or designed their work. Old Roman architecture was in great part imitation work, and often bad; but the Renaissance Italian is the professional style; with it the profession of architecture became established; its foundation was a knowledge of the 'orders,' and its practice was that of composing these orders in various fanciful displays; in fact, it might be called a school of architectural posture-making and deportment. Any draughtsman, with a reasonable knowledge of these orders, might become an architect; and with an eye for outline, and some cleverness in arrangement, he might produce on paper an endless variety of 'classical' combinations. The style was expensive, but when it arose questions of expense were of secondary importance: it was, somehow, seldom the proprietor that had to pay the bill. But the great success of the style was due neither to its novelty nor its variety, but to the facility with which the architect could prepare, at any distance from the work, the drawings for an entire building; and to the very little personal superintendence by the draughtsman that the work required. Instead of giving his entire attention to one building, the accomplished drawing-master found that he could take commissions for a dozen or a score. The amount of drawing in each case was comparatively small; a little shuffling of columns and windows revealed some new accident of combination that passed for design; and as for detail, the classic orders served for all. Thus then all

parties were well pleased ; the employer was in the fashion, and piqued himself on his classic refinement and exceptional 'good taste' : the architect had large practice in a gentlemanly profession : and both, with the vanity and self-gratulation of ignorant conceit, could despise the Duomo of Pisa or the Choir of Westminster, as the rude relics of a barbarous and unenlightened age.

In England Vanbrugh and Lord Burlington have made us see how quickly men of literary culture, and of noble rank, could master the designing knack, and then provide new luxuries of architectural magnificence to put their wondering and confiding friends on the high road to ruin. Blenheim House is critically known as 'picturesque,' but it is a scene rather than a dwelling ; there may be a house imbedded in the stonework, but the real effect, which is geological rather than architectural, more suggestive of a quarry than of a palace or a home, is due entirely to non-essentials, to the mass of superfluous material symmetrically disposed, and yet altogether hideous and unseemly ; in fact a sort of architectural elephantiasis. Burlington House, though exotic in style, was a very respectable and praiseworthy effort ; and the colonnade was no doubt a grateful memento of the Italian tour. Both the houses have been much admired, and may be acknowledged to reflect great credit on the professional skill of their respective designers.

Gradually, however, the 'classic' enthusiasm wore away ; the style ceased to be new, and it was found to be costly ; and when what is called the Grecian style had passed through its brief period of public favour, and urgent want arose for some new thing, it happened that a few careful publications about Gothic work appeared, and gained the attention of the 'artistic' world. Here, then, was another chance for the profession ; the style was not new, but it was practically unfamiliar ; and though it was made or developed by working masons at a time when there was no classical artistic

knowledge, and so was merely the picturesque effort of semi-barbarous artisans, it would bring business to the profession. The public thought it pretty, the clergy sympathized, as it was quite in their line; and it became, curiously enough, the fashion to be very proud of any weak imitation of the poor rude, working man who heretofore had been so very much despised. The imitation was of course conventional, for the 'profession' had no intention of giving up their gentlemanly position, and becoming real builders, carpenters, and stone-masons. A class of quick-fingered draughtsmen soon prepared 'examples,' gathered from the old masons' work, which their professional customers might mix and mingle with almost as much facility as they could 'compose' the classic orders; and it was really found that designs in the various styles of English and Continental Gothic might be manufactured with such correctness of detail, and so much promptitude and rapidity, that the *dilettanti* could be satisfied, the public hoodwinked, and clients thoroughly pleased, while the trading element of the profession was profitably extended, and its returns increased to an amount that was never dreamt of by the half-experienced professional surveyor of the Georgian age. We had exchanged handicraft long since for finger-work, and the new method is neither an advance nor a reform. We have taken no step towards the necessary and essential change of system, but only made a prudent and remunerative change of face. We have 'instruments,' as formerly in place of tools, fingers instead of hands, and 'examples' to serve for brains, just as in the Italian or classic work. We are only moving with the times, and as customers increase in numbers, and correspondingly decrease in average wealth, Gothic, which may be made both cheap and pretty where required, brings more and easier business to the trade. We have, as in the classic revival, compilers instead of artists, and machines instead of workmen, and, worst of all, a public that is quite unable to distinguish noble building work and true imaginative art from copying and pretence.

The new Gothic fashion soon became popular; and firms of competition speculators flooded the market with their illusory but attractive wares. The 'business' had its risks, and for a time expenditure might bring but little prompt return; but names became known, the constant use of pretty details insured extended popularity; and thus, instead of the quiet, local development of true Gothic work, a fashionable imposture spread throughout the land. 'Art manufacture,' a falsehood in its very name, became established, and fittings and furniture, carving and stained glass, embroidery, painting, metal work and encaustic tiles are turned out wholesale, at trade prices—with 'commissions'—by the manufacturing firms. The working-man is nowhere seen; he is not even heard of. He is at the 'factory' when the bell rings, and he files and polishes the bit of work that he is set to do; but fancy, and volition, and artistic thought are wanting; he is but a slave, an incorrect machine, whom we may hope eventually to supplant by some new patented contrivance that will have no brains, and so be safe from all mistakes, and automatically true. The workman, who is the very spring and source of art, sinks to a mere tool; and instead of thousands of real artists, handicraftsmen, whose mental energies and poetic fancy would by this time have gone far to elevate and refine the whole community of our working-class, we have our parish churches and cathedrals, college chapels and town-halls, our country mansions and our suburban houses, laden and encumbered with a profusion of art-manufactured gewgaws, which are thoroughly debasing to the buildings and to the artistic workmen, but which bring enormous profit to the manufacturing firms, give fame and fortune to the successful drawing-master, and enable him to pander with a facility that has never before been equalled, to the childish sensuality of the public, the professional vanity of the clergy, and the vulgar luxury of the rich.

We have not far to go for an example of the spirit and

method that we have endeavoured to describe. That St. Stephen's Chapel was sacrificed in order that the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Speaker might sit face to face, at the distance of a furlong more or less, is an old grievance. There was no necessity for this mutual gaze, nor for the arrangement that provided for it; but it was just one of those simple yet adroit and claptrap artifices by which a clever schemer will astonish and charm a wondering Committee and secure the approval of a discriminating public. Beneath the chapel was a crypt of unexampled beauty, and this was not destroyed; it was a quiet, unobtrusive place, and there was hope that by a fortunate neglect it might escape until this Gothic reign of terror had entirely passed away. Parliament, however, was instructed that it ought to 'have a 'taste,' and that this could well be shown by lavish votes of money to be spent in bedizening the 'vault.' So this inestimable relic has now been 'restored' and painted, polished and gilded, glazed, burnished and tiled, and furnished with a toy table and some correctly fashionable chairs, so that the memory of the place is entirely gone, and it might pass for an expensive camera obscura, or a mere show place for the vile rubbish of the decorator's trade. This too is popular, and has the zealous patronage of the sanctimonious connoisseurship of the House of Commons, and the stupid admiration of the gaping crowd.

The neighbouring Chapter House has been restored, and so far as the work has gone there is little cause for complaint, and happily much to approve. The upper details of the work, indeed, are lamentably feeble, and for the central cross we have a small edition of our uncouth acquaintance on the summit of the Hyde Park trophy; but these are minor failings, and if the restoration is arrested, and the masonry is saved from the defilement of the decorative artists, there will be a certain satisfaction gained by the completion of the structure. But let Salisbury be a warning, not an example;

the reredos at Ely, and the screens at Lichfield and Hereford, are sufficient monumental records of the audacity of an architect and of the simplicity of his employers ; the Munich glass at Glasgow Cathedral shows how easily people are led to waste their substance on a vain show. Abundant errors such as these have made the prospect of continued outlay on the Chapter House a matter of anxiety rather than of hope.

Near the west end of the Abbey is a specimen of the domestic architecture of the new revival. The street elevation of this row of houses is a crowded and unnecessary medley of breaks and buttresses, bay windows and stone gables ; and in the centre is a weak imitation of an abbey gateway, with two incongruous and false projecting turrets. We enter underneath the arch, and find that the whole affair is a mere frontispiece of the speculating builder stamp, and that in elevation towards the quadrangle the houses are mere bald brickwork which, had the frontages been reversed, would have been a very suitable extension of the picturesque effect of Victoria Street adjoining. The obscure medieval workman would not have been nearly so clever as this : it would not have occurred to him to design an elaborate imposture, to make a brave show in front of all the stock properties of the draughtsman's trade, and leave the back all beggarly and bare ; there would have been some decent reticence, if only in recognition of the adjacent venerable pile. The Jerusalem Chamber is a pattern of modesty in building ; and though forward in position, it is humble in character, and adds greatly to the apparent height, and to the picturesque effect of the Minster towers. In the new buildings this subordination is, in sentiment, reversed ; and the contrasted qualities of 'dignity and 'impudence' are again illustrated by new examples, and on an unusual and inverted scale.

The choir of Chichester Cathedral also is restored, and additions have been made to the oaken stalls and canopies. The old wood-work is not in the best style, but it is simple,

and is not inconsistent with the plain Norman piers. The new work is after quite another manner, and everything that the bow-pencil could do for the money has been attempted. The paved floor for such a building should be plain, and perhaps a little rude; but here we have costly, polished, parti-coloured marble-work that makes the old piers and mouldings look coarse by contrast, and itself gives the idea of plate-glass with a pattern under it, a sort of horizontal *potichomanie*. The metal furniture was 'manufactured by 'the Skidmore Company.' Such a statement would have taken Quentin Matsys some short time to comprehend; and he would doubtless have inquired whether pictures also could be manufactured in this way. Here again is a reredos, a big arch and gable, intercepting the view of the eastern triforium and the Lady Chapel arch, and by its size and that of the carved figures, greatly reducing the apparent scale of the Cathedral. All the work is finely polished, sharply cut, and is a creditable piece of modern furniture; it is said to have cost two thousand pounds, and if the subscribers would kindly remove it, the Chapter might congratulate themselves on an architectural benefit worth quite double the amount to their cathedral choir. If carving is required, there are in the south aisle wall two of the finest works remaining of their period, that might be promoted to the place of honour in the church instead of this trade specimen of statuary. Flaxman's figure of Resignation, in fortunate proximity, might help us to endure this wanton mischief; but restoration is again offensive, and the most charming memorial carving in the county is to be entirely obscured by worthless coloured glass. And this, it should be said, is a fair specimen of our Cathedral restoration.

The buildings we have quoted are public property, or ecclesiastical, and are therefore under very superior control. As we go further from the central government in Church and State we may fare worse. The architectural gibberish of

St. James's Club is cognate with similar discordant and incoherent utterances at Manchester. Then there is the whimsical variety at the Gaiety theatre in the Strand and at Keble College; and the childish, half exotic work at the new Museum buildings at Oxford, all which show how desperate are the designers' fears lest they should not be personally recognized and professionally distinguishable: the architect being, in fact, the chief end of the building. In churches we have endless variety of affectation and conceit, from the ritual and grim, and the high and correct, to the Evangelical and dull. And the neo-Gothic Renaissance is at last developed into the elaborate meanness of the Dissenting chapel, and the staring vulgarity of the Marine Hotel.

The reason of all this aberration and decline is easily explained. The work of design, as it is called, being in comparatively few hands, there is a great loss of artistic power which would be saved and properly employed were each building designed by its own working men. Builders are of the nature of poets: they are born, not made; and it is therefore true policy to secure and utilize as large a number of artistic and poetic minds as can be possibly employed. To ignore these, and to concentrate the work in the hands of a comparatively few, is an abandoned folly, manifest on its mere statement; it prevents the spread of intelligence and cultivation among the working builders, and from them among the masses of the people; and it breeds a class of 'architects,' gamblers in competitions, draughtsmen and surveyors, whose productions are a curse to the nation, and, in various degrees of vileness, a travesty of art.

For three hundred years we have been trying to build from above downwards; we have been endeavouring, in fact, to plant the pyramid on its apex, and, having so completely failed, might we not now set to work to build it from its base? The connoisseurs have pretended to teach the public how to build, and the public fail to learn; can we not ask the working

men to show us what to do? We have spent hundreds of millions sterling with presumptuous intention, and we have succeeded—to the extent of the Law Courts' competition, and Mr. Street's design. Might we not consider whether the profession is quite worth this sacrifice, and also seek to learn how our forefathers managed? The difference is extreme; we build no decent buildings, they built no bad ones.

Their method is well known: it is very ancient, and of most honourable usage. Tubal Cain, to begin with, 'was an 'instructor of every artifice in brass and iron.' How he could get on without drawing at South Kensington it is hard to conceive. Still here is nothing about drawings, but only about 'artificeers;' and these were 'instructed,' they had not risen to the level of machines. But in Egypt we do get some notion of the primitive 'surveyor.' 'Therefore they did set 'over them *taskmasters* to afflict them with their burdens, and 'they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in morter 'and in brick.' So there is nothing new under the sun. Let us hope then that some providence may arise to rescue our people from their 'hard bondage, in morter and in brick,' and from the 'taskmasters' that do so grievously 'afflict 'them.'

Then about a hundred and fifty years later we read of 'Bezaleel, the son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah,' that he was 'filled with the spirit of God to *devise* curious works, to *work* 'in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of 'stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any 'manner of cunning work.' Precisely so; and thus it was with our own forefathers; if they had not 'the spirit of God 'to devise curious work, and to work,' wherever was such a spirit shown? 'And He hath put in his heart that he may 'teach, both he and Aholiab. Them hath He filled with 'wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, 'and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, and of 'the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that

‘*devise* cunning work. Then *wrought* Bezaleel and Aholiab.’ So did our forefathers; but will any one say that either our modern architects or our mechanics are ‘wise-hearted men to ‘*devise and to make* any manner of cunning work’?

Again, ‘King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of ‘Tyre’—Solomon did not, it appears, send to Hiram for designs for choice, or proclaim a competition with leave for Hiram to take his chance with the rest—‘And he was filled ‘with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all ‘works in brass;’—and from the long list of his works, his ‘wisdom and understanding’ were considerable—‘and skilful ‘to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and ‘in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson, and to grave any manner of graving, and to find out any ‘device which shall be put to him.’ Hiram had evidently not wasted his time on orders or examples; he was skilled to ‘find out,’ not to copy; but how he could get on without an eminent ecclesiastical architect and proper detailed working drawings is a wonder, doubtless, to the profession.

We can proceed again; and some four hundred years later the method seems to be unchanged: ‘And they put the ‘money in the hand of the *workmen* that had the oversight of ‘the house of the Lord, and they gave it to the *workmen that* ‘*wrought*, even to the artificers and builders they gave it. ‘And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of ‘the service of the house of the Lord, and *hired masons and* ‘*carpenters* to repair the house of the Lord, and also such ‘as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the Lord. ‘And they gave the money, being told, *into the hands of them* ‘*that did the work*. Moreover, they reckoned not with the men ‘into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on ‘the workmen, for they dealt faithfully.’ And these men were Jews, and not Christians at all, that did the work, and dealt faithfully. Really, as one reads, there is a giddy sense as of complete inversion. A metropolitan ecclesiastical

building, built and repaired without an architect ; no hint of such an intermediate Providence ! but ‘ workmen ’ that had the oversight ; and no reckoning, ‘ for they dealt faithfully.’ Could anything be a greater contrast to our actual system ? We have had a dozen architects, and have to admire the Law Courts’ design ; Solomon had a clever workman, and he built the Temple. We have very tight contracts, and sufficiently sharp practice, occasionally, about extras and omissions, and we are Christians of the nineteenth century of *grace* ; the Jews, twenty-five centuries ago, that had the *law*, were implicitly trusted, for they dealt faithfully. Surely *we* ourselves are not so far inferior as this ; it must be our *method* that is wrong.

But let us make another imaginary step through eighteen centuries of time, and to the other end of the Mediterranean, and refer our readers to the twenty-first chapter of Mr. Street’s most interesting and accurate ‘ Account of Gothic ‘ Architecture in Spain,’—a work that does him more credit than any of his buildings or designs ; and there we have a full revelation of the practice that achieved the noble works which Mr. Street has illustrated for us with his ready pencil and discriminating pen. Nothing can be clearer than the rule that the master of the works, or architect, as now he would be called, made the ‘ device ’ and also was the builder ; and again we find that the chief lapicide, or master of the works, was in fact, like Hiram or Aholiab, a working man. There is some symptom of an occasional change of builder, and it appears probable that different men were employed, according to their several ability, at different parts or stages of the work. One man might be entrusted with the main walls, and another might undertake a noble entrance porch, or an elaborate storey of tabernacle work ; and this surmise is somewhat justified by the sharpness of the junctions, and the abruptness of the changes in the style of work.

It is quite clear, then, that the builder was a handcrafts-

man, not a maker of drawings ; that he devoted his attention to one work ; that he lived at it, and in many cases spent the best part of his life upon it ; and, in remarkable contrast to the mode of his modern successors, his work was always honourable, and his name was little known, and never advertised or trumpeted abroad. *He* did ‘not go up and ‘down ; and all his desire was in the work of his craft.’ There is in him nothing like our picture-making and commission-hunting modern architects, of whom truly we could not continue the quotation : ‘All these trust to their hands, ‘and every one is wise in his work ;’ and ‘without these ‘cannot a city be inhabited.’

The evidence, direct and inferential, might be accumulated overwhelmingly. Fabric-rolls, history, tradition, muniments and records, and even the building art itself give evidence. In more than one Continental cathedral the effigy of the architect is seen, and nearly always in his working dress ; and those conversant with ancient work, not as mere sketchers, but using practised and discerning eyes, will be able to decide almost as easily as if they saw the work in progress, whether it is the labour of a copyist or the expression of an original mind. And for the future when our workmen are restored to free intelligence and thought, and rescued from the bondage that professionalism inflicts upon them, we may reasonably expect and hope that they will again be filled with the ‘spirit of ‘God’ to devise curious works ; and that these works being well understood and intelligently appreciated by their neighbours and associates, the noble art of building will gradually be recovered, and its gentle, beneficent, and persuasive influence will quickly spread, until all the handicraftsmen of the land ‘deal faithfully,’ and become ‘wise hearted to ‘devise and to make any manner of cunning work.’

But architects are not the only plague that desolates our buildings ; the lawyers also have smitten them with a paralysing stroke. The visitor to London will remember that in

several parts of the town there are groups of streets most regularly planned, and lined with houses very similar to one another in their feeble outlines. They are the 'estates' of noblemen and others, which have been covered with houses under agreements for building leases, generally for a ninety-nine years' term. These are the more obvious instances of the practice; but throughout London and its suburbs not one house in a thousand is absolutely freehold. The average term of the leases also is so reduced by lapse of time and by short renewals, that the houses in London will, on an average, be all lost to their present owners within forty years. When this system began is not very accurately known, but the nomenclature of the streets and the style of building show that it was considerably developed during the last century; and such has been its recent increase that the buildings of one year would occupy an extent of frontage of something more than fifty miles. This sounds like a careful provision for the increasing population—a business-like anticipation of a public want. Nothing can be further from the fact; the error is one of common sense, but we are far too clever for any such simplicity of method; the houses are built, not primarily as a comfort for the occupant, but as a security for the freeholder. The expression that 'London is a province 'covered with houses,' has an esoteric significance that the inventor of the phrase was not aware of. London houses and the people of London are merely in accidental contact; there is no community of interest or mutual beneficence between them.

There is nothing that a Londoner will so strenuously condemn as his abode; and this is an excusable result of all the troubles and inconveniences that his house inflicts on him. The house in question is generally a wooden booth, covered at the top with slates, enclosed around with a thin film of brickwork, and daubed about with plaster. It can hardly, in fact, be called a building, and for its size it has far

less strength and stability than the furniture it holds. The occupant knows nothing about his house; he is in it to-day, but in a twelvemonth he may have forgotten it in the anguish of another equally afflicting domicile. Of the most simple arrangements and details of the building he is utterly ignorant, and he is childishly helpless if anything goes wrong. All that is necessary for the health and cleanliness of the inmates and the preservation and security of the house, is a deep, inexplicable, hidden mystery, that tends to derange the stomach and irritate the brain. There is the constant appalling fear of the unknown, worse than a skeleton, in every house; and all this torment, ignorance, discomfort, and bitterness of life, with very much besides, is due to the pernicious influence of leasehold tenure. Yet there still is hope; though we must look for it, as usual, 'at the bottom.' The working man must be invoked to raise us all, when he himself obtains sufficient motive. Moses was well conversant with human nature, and first in his detail of prohibited desires was, not the wife, but 'thy neighbour's house;' and yet we systematically ignore the healthy social and domestic instinct that urges every man to absolute possession of his home. The working man, for whom, as we are told, so much must be provided, is practically forbidden to provide a dwelling for himself; he is debarred from practising his handcraftsman's skill in the construction and arrangements of his home.

This leasehold tenure, with its gambling speculation, extensive and often fraudulent building agreements, its heavy law costs, complicated mortgages, releases, re-mortgages, and second charges, its doubtful titles and dreary waste of title-deeds, the risks of forfeiture, and the shortening term, forbids prudent men of business to erect substantial, well-built houses. Small plots of freehold land, except on the estates of building societies, are seldom in the market, and these estates almost invariably become traps for the inexperienced, and opportunities for the scamp; since, while this system

lasts, they will, by the mere force of custom, fall very much into the hands of speculating builders. There can consequently be no hope that working men or their employers will be well and comfortably housed until this insecurity of tenure is removed. The enfranchisement of leaseholds and their absolute prevention would do more than anything whatever to improve the dwellings of the whole community. The architectural, social, and political effect of such enfranchisement would be immense. Workmen would build for themselves, and interchangeably for one another ; and those who are not workmen, seeing the superiority of the work done by the bricklayer or mason, smith or wright, for himself or for his fellow-workmen, over the ordinary task or day work of the drudging mechanic, would dispense with architects, surveyors, and builders, and all the class of middlemen, and would have their houses planned and built exclusively by local working men, with whom, as well-informed and interested artisans, they could directly and conveniently confer. Art and its employer would go hand in hand, equal, mutually respectful, and confiding, giving no place or opportunity for unions or strikes, or international societies. The great class of working men would be freeholders, having an interest in the capital and the soil, as well as in the labour of the country. Nothing has so much tended to demoralize our urban population as their severance from all local and territorial interest in the towns in which they dwell. This is the real cause of the dilapidation and habitual squalor of the dwellings of the poor ; the working men have no domestic local interest, and they therefore seek no status in society ; they lose all seriousness and self-respect, and become dirty, dissolute, and improvident. Among the younger men there is a very general desire to improve their homes ; but the respectful, wholesome pride that would maintain and multiply the decencies and comforts of a well-built freehold house is now depraved, and workmen's means are wasted on the cumbersome profusion of bad

furniture and trashy vanities that go to form that dreadful institution, the ‘best front parlour.’

The greater part of the house property of London and our large towns belongs to no one in particular ; there is great division of property, but in the worst possible way, horizontally, we may say, instead of vertically. First, there is the freeholder, who has a ground rent ; then, secondly, a leaseholder, with an improved ground rent ; and third, the nominal proprietor, with the rack-rent ; fourth, the first mortgagee ; and probably, fifth, the second mortgagee ; and sixth, the tenant, or leaseholder, with, perhaps, a sub-tenant, yearly, and probably some lodgers by the week or month. Besides these ‘interests’ there are the lawyers, with their bills of costs, collecting agents, repairing builders, water rates, and insurance charges. This, or something like this, may be taken as the probable condition of three-quarters of the house property of London ; the whole metropolis is, in fact, under a curse of law, which has in our great towns destroyed domestic building as an art. Its decadence can be historically traced in proportion to the extension of leasehold tenure. This tenure breeds the class of ‘surveyors,’ who gradually engross all power, and simultaneously abandon all care, except for the freeholder. These men are, in fact, the spurious successors of the old builders, the ruck of the profession, a mass of struggling impotence, to whom we owe the travesties of Grecian, Gothic, and Venetian ‘styles’ that speculating builders use to decorate their ill-conditioned works and satisfy the ‘public taste’ for ornament and ‘art.’ Their patrons are the lawyers, the solicitors of the ‘estates,’ who are the chief contrivers and manipulators of this inartistic and demoralizing system ; and to whose ‘deeds’ the degradation of domestic building work is principally due.

It is a remarkable instance of the ‘Chinese’ endurance of Englishmen, that the people of London have not unanimously struck against this evil tenure. They have so small an interest

in the houses, that they might, with proper independence and moderation, urge the cessation, by legislative means if necessary, of a custom which although injurious to all, is more particularly so to those large classes that are now the objects of chief national and social care. Much that is meant to be severe is sometimes said about the manners of the working classes, but a few who know them in their homes can testify that their unfortunate condition and their mode of life is greatly due to the pernicious customs, the injurious greed, and the defective or bad legislation of their territorial superiors. Peabody Buildings, and others of the kind, are useful, and, in part, exemplary; but the good that they can do is hardly visible in presence of the enormous evil that remains. The real duty of the upper classes is, not to provide new dwellings for the poor, but to remove every hindrance to their making proper houses for themselves. Of these hindrances the greatest evidently are, our almost universal leasehold tenure, complexity of title, and litigious transfers; and while these obstacles exist, the power of immediate self-interest, the only power that naturally seeks the universal national improvement of the dwellings of the poor, and has no free exercise. At present legislation can do little positively good, except to stigmatise and possibly prevent these foolish and pernicious customs. If the working man should rise in self-respect, and free himself from one profession, he would still in all things that affect his home remain oppressed and fettered by these legal bonds, and Parliament alone can utter the command to loose him and let him go. He now is, like another Issachar, 'a strong ass crouching down between 'two burdens'; but if he could be relieved of the oppressive twofold incubus of architects and law he would begin to have his own again. His social status then would be restored, his mental energy developed, his self-respect enhanced, and his address and manners softened; nothing would be more conducive to our social progress than such elevation of the men

whose works continually affect our daily life. There then would be no need of 'the profession ;' and our drawing-master-architects subsiding into their appropriate spheres as book-makers, graphic artists, business men, students of symbolism and archæology, and, in fact, pupils and illustrators of those very workmen whom they now profess to direct and to control, it will again be recognized that the glory of a nation is in its men, and not, as lately we have been taught to believe, in its machines.

Leaseholds, then, like copyholds, should, at least in urban districts, be enfranchised ; the freeholder receiving the full value of his property in fee. The thing might easily be tried without any interference with private interests. A score or two of civic, ecclesiastical, and charitable corporations hold a large proportion of the London freehold land and ground-rents, the development and care of which must grievously divert the limited attention of trustees from their administrative duties. Were each ground-rent separately sold, with proper preference to the leaseholder, and the proceeds invested in Government securities, the corporate incomes would be increased, the care and expense of management would be saved, and the enfranchisement of many thousand leaseholds would be an honour and a blessing to the metropolitan community. But charitable corporations are, by law, forbidden to buy up, and so enfranchise, urban leaseholds which they have, by law, created on their own estates. For lawyers understand the tenure much too well to let substantial clients sink their funds in leaseholds ; they create the plague, and then they shrewdly institute a selfish quarantine.

The tenure being purged, all titles should be certified and registered, so that every transfer may be prompt and cheap, enhancing greatly the commercial value of all urban property, and resulting in the general improvement of house-building. It may be objected that London freeholds are still in the market ; we are not discussing accidents, but an almost universal rule,

which causes needless injury to fixed and life-long residents, and to the poor enormous suffering, from which, unlike those who thus afflict them, they can never possibly escape. We have in urban leaseholds a pernicious and expensive, very foolish custom, and a bad example ; their entire abolition would be a real conservative reform, and it ought at once to be undertaken.

We might then begin to learn some valuable lessons from the working man. He would practically teach us that before hoping to build grandly we must learn to build simply and modestly, and that before setting to work on Temples of Themis and Palaces of Justice, we had better see that the national ability and discernment is up to the level of a cottage or a barn, We should learn that architecture is not to be a luxury, but a constant, common, daily work ; that all houses should be architectural, and that the architecture of London should not be sought in a few results of competition designs that a stranger, in his ignorance, might take a cab to see, but that every street and house should be as characteristic and expressive as a temple or a palace ; that, because a building is public, there is no reason why it should be prominent, nor that it should be showy because it happens to be big ; that a nobleman's mansion, the abode of luxury, refinement, and hereditary rank, should be distinguished by architectural grace far more than the chief office for the settlement or aggravation of the vain disputes that sordid rivalry continually breeds ; and that courts of law should be quiet and unobtrusive buildings, in the use of which publicity is perhaps necessary, but, to those most interested, grievously undesirable. Nothing could be more painful to a quondam, actual, or possible client, than a noticeable building for these courts of law. Our judges, in their way, are men of culture ; and if those who build the courts would make the reticent and serious judgments from the bench their models and exemplars, they would achieve all that is possible for justice to demand. But here is the contrast : the judges are content

to speak in the vernacular ; the architects are working in a dead language. We must have a building language also of our own, by which we may have natural and prompt expression of ideas, and for this we must re-learn our national speech, so that every child may understand the house in which he dwells as clearly as the book he reads. No other way is possible ; the hand, like the tongue, can be eloquent only in its own idiom.

But, it may be said, are we to go back to the fourteenth century, and ignore all the advancement that mankind has made for the last five hundred years ? Nothing of the kind. We would interfere with no advancement ; but we surely have advanced enough in *luxury* of building since the choir of Westminster was planned, and certainly in building *art* we have as obviously retrograded. We may trace the artistic history of the nation back for, if possible, a thousand years, before we find a pair of public buildings such as has been planted on the Burlington estate. No ! what we have now to do is to press *forward* to the fourteenth century and endeavour to recover something of the noble, labour-loving spirit of our great ancestors ; when this is done, we may again begin to talk about advancement.

When art becomes securely and intelligently founded in our common practice and experience, it will grow and fructify as in the middle ages, when the workmen ruled ; in perfect contrast to its moribund condition while oppressed by Connoisseurs. For the last three hundred years these leaders of opinion have directed public ignorance. They began with the extinction of the pointed style, and they have brought us down to the new buildings at the Kensington Museum, where the eye is pained, and all artistic judgment is offended by the obtrusive colour, uncouth outline, and abundant ugliness of the new buildings ; the nursery, home, and illustration, of what is called ‘art manufacture.’ It is, in fact, neither ‘art’ nor in any sense true handicraftsman’s work, but mere machine and copy work, heartless,

senseless, and absurd, false in principle, and paralysing eventually to the artistic skill of any working man who practises it. The decorations on the columns are expensive; but they have neither ideal beauty nor practical fitness. Were one column placed like the central pier of a chapter-house, there might be some excuse for the design; the Trajan column, and the 'apprentice pier,' also, have some similar justification; but these foolish things, placed so high that their enrichment cannot be seen from a distance, and on the edge of a platform, so that they can only be seen on one-side, the enrichment being continuous and varied round the column, are to be taken not merely as a specimen of 'art manufacture,' but of the imbecility to which such practice inevitably leads.

In the Museum are some large wrought-iron gates that have been removed from Hampton Court, with a very proper sense of their value, and of the impossibility of making good the loss should they unhappily be damaged or destroyed. They are not exquisite, but very bold, manly, and effective works, made, and certainly designed, by a thorough workman; and are as good and gratifying a specimen of out-of-door hand-wrought iron-work as can easily be met with. Close by is a gate from Berlin, the smooth and lifeless composition of a draughtsman, whose design was handed over to a manufacturing metal-worker to be carried out. Nothing can be baser than this work, which is thought worthy of a distinguished place in the Kensington Museum. The cost must have been great, and as the work is done with perfect care and nicety the labour was no doubt far greater here than on the older gates; but in all the genius of handicraft, it is the brain of a caterpillar against the intellect of a man; mechanical tool-work, dead as a door-nail or a screw; a piece of stupid luxury of expense; in fact, 'art manufacture.'

Forty years ago Trafalgar Square became the field for *dilettante* architectural diversions. The National Gallery had been

declared a failure ; and although it would be difficult to find any work of this century that shows more refinement of feeling—the two four-column porticos are delightful in their way—still it may be conceded that the unfortunate conditions imposed on the architect had compelled an unsatisfactory result. A committee was then appointed to decide upon the arrangements of the Square ; and, the Gallery being low in elevation, it was sagaciously determined to deprive it of the rising ground above which it was fortunately placed, to sink a large pit, and build a high retaining wall, with a balustrade above, which most effectively reduces the apparent height of the façade. At each end of the balustrade an enormous block of masonry completely dwarfs the building, and on one of these is a colossal statue of a man and horse, that in a general view reaches to the cornice of the Gallery. Two large water-pans were placed in the pit, and lest the water should be too plainly seen, these pans were kept a foot or two above the level of the ground. To continue the gradation of increasing scale, the lamps and their pedestals have been considerably made fit for a lighthouse ; then came the Nelson Column, with gigantic steps ; the big bas-reliefs in turn made these look dwarfish ; and then the lions minimized the whole. This is the result of years of consideration by the combined talent and connoisseurship of the nation. It would be hard to find a more impressive combination of absurdity, and ignorance, and want of art.\* This was all done by ‘architects of eminence’ and by our most distinguished connoisseurs. The

\* We venture to suggest that the ‘pit’ of the square should be raised, with a slope to the upper edge of the water-pans ; that the balustrade, pedestal and colossal statue, and lamp-posts should be cleared away ; that a bank of grass and flowering shrubs should be formed on the north side of the square, and that the square itself should be planted with good forest trees. If the great fountains were removed, and a raised garden made in the centre of each basin, four small jets among the verdure would be more effective than the present fountains with a background of mean buildings or of dirty sky. The great steps of the column also might be banked with grass or clothed with evergreens.

working men designed and built the Abbey choir and transepts ; unknown men, not eminent, but able at their work. Are, then, the workmen, or the drawing-masters and the connoisseurs, the real men of art ?

The late Sir Robert Peel, a patron of the arts, and a reputed connoisseur, assured the House of Commons that the new front of the British Museum was to be 'a masterpiece.' Instead of this we have a huge, ill-fitting range of useless columns, with a bald and harsh entablature ; a mere dull stoneyard. Were the front court enclosed with a comparatively plain stone wall, and useful entrances and corridors, these cumbrous columns might be utilized within a spacious hall, in area equal to the central dome with all its adjuncts and annexes, and the building would be visible above the gilded iron screen.

We have endeavoured to describe the forlorn condition in which we are left in all that concerns our public as well as private building-works. Having neither artists to build, nor critics to discuss, nor a public worthy to approve of any work, it is time to institute an architectural reform, to start again in the old genuine practice of artistic work. But for this end the master workman, who devotes his time entirely to one work, must absolutely rule in architectural affairs ; so that in every case he may entirely supersede the manufacturers of designs and competition speculators, with their following of drawing-clerks and decorators, whose conceits and meddling have degraded nearly every building, ancient or modern, in the land.

We have referred to the class of drawing-clerks without a compliment, but not without feelings of compassionate solicitude. These gentlemen, who are the architectural expectation, not to say hope, of the next generation, are in a desperately false position ; they are, in fact, the real architects of the present. That the more fashionable members of the profession can properly consider, devise, and superintend

the widely-scattered works on which they are engaged, is a perfectly inadmissible idea, and its adoption demonstrates how worthless the profession is. By far the greater portion of the work is designed as well as drawn by these poor clerks. It has been said that an eminent architect allows no drawing to leave his office without his inspection first received; but this places him just on a level with a reader for the press. He is not a poet or creator, but a mere check-taker or turnpike man. The *rôles* are, in fact, exchanged. The clerk is the architect, and the architect is the 'clerk of the cheque.' Nothing, then, could be of more advantage to the great body of architectural assistants than a complete change in the method of our building-work. Instead of spending their lives in miserable drudgery and vain expectations, with minds enervated by dull routine, alternating with the excitement of the paltry jealousies of a precarious and speculating profession, they might themselves become the true successors of the ancient builders; and passing from a chronic state of anxiety, and disappointment, and despair, they would attain to a life of real work, true, grateful, ennobling, and refined.



THE HOPE  
OF  
ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE.

BY  
JOHN T. EMMETT.

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*In the sciences the philosopher leads; the rest of us take on trust what he tells us. The spiritual progress of mankind has followed the opposite course; each forward step has been made first among the people, and the last converts have been among the learned. The interests and prejudices of the cultivated classes are enlisted on the side of the existing order of things. Simpler men have less to lose; they come more in contact with the realities of life, and they learn wisdom in the experience of suffering. Thus, when the learned and wise turned away from Christianity, the fishermen of the Galilean lake listened, and a new life began for mankind. A miner's son converted Germany to the Reformation. The London artisans and the peasants of Buckinghamshire went to the stake for doctrines which were accepted afterwards as a sacred revelation. When a great teacher comes again upon the earth, he will find his disciples where Christ found them and Luther found them.*--JOHN ANTHONY FROUDE.

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MOST cultivated men profess to have some knowledge of the building art. The knowledge is avowedly but superficial, just a refinement; not a serious acquaintance with the work of men, but a genteel and delicate appreciation of what they call 'the beautiful.' In other words, they know what pleases them, and yet they know not why, nor have they any thought or care about the worthiness, or otherwise, of their enjoyment. They possibly have learnt some names of styles, and can, perhaps, distinguish more or less correctly what these mean. Their judgment is in favour of some style as 'preferable;' and they pique themselves upon their keen discernment of the special merits and peculiar knack of certain living architects. This is the class and character of those who pass for men of 'taste,' who take the lead in Boards, in Church Committees, and in Government Commissions, and to them is very greatly due the constantly declining state of English art. Our buildings fully justify the estimate that not one cultivated man among ten thousand has sound knowledge and discriminating power in architectural affairs, or an opinion that is worth a moment's confidence. The small minority will testify that this is true, and that the talk concerning art and artists prevalent in good society is generally make-believe and empty prattle.

Such ignorance should be abated. To obtain a thorough knowledge of the methods and the merits of true art would need much time as well as patient industry ; but, thanks to Mr. Fergusson's illustrated 'History of Architecture,' an amateur may gain a large comparative, albeit second-hand, acquaintance with the noble works of ancient builders as well as with the feeble efforts of our modern men. His later 'History' is, besides, a pungent and continuous satire on the royal, reverend, and noble victims of the modern architectural system ; an exhibition of the monumental follies of the vaunted culture of the West, and of the petrified delusions of three hundred years. The climax of the work is in the Preface and the Introduction ; here Mr. Fergusson has concentrated the result of his long study of the modern styles, and he proclaims them all to be mere pomp and semblance, 'vanity and lies' :—

'The Styles of Architecture which have been described in 'the previous parts of this work,' those on Ancient Architecture, 'may be called the True Styles. Those that remain to 'be examined may in like manner be designated the Copying 'or Imitative Styles of Architectural Art. It is perhaps not 'too much to say that no perfectly truthful architectural 'building has been erected in Europe since the Reformation. 'In modern designs there is always an effort either to repro- 'duce the style of some foreign country or that of some bygone 'age ; frequently both. St. Peter's and St. Paul's are not 'Roman buildings, though affecting a classical style of orna- 'mentation ; and even the Walhalla and the Madeleine are only 'servile copies. So, too, with our Gothic fashions. Our best 'modern churches attain to no greater truthfulness or origin- 'ality of design than exists in the Walhalla, or in buildings 'of that class. All this degrades Architecture from its high 'position as a quasi-natural production to that of a mere 'imitative art. In this form it may be quite competent to 'gratify our tastes and feelings, but can never appeal to our 'higher intellectual faculties. Besides this loss of intellectual

‘ value, the art has lost all ethnographic signification. So completely is this the case, that few are aware that such a science exists as the Ethnography of Art, and that the same ever shifting fashions have not always prevailed.’

Truth and simplicity, and ethnographic value being lost, the charge of wastefulness and vandalism follows:—‘ While admiring the true Mediaeval Art with the intensest enthusiasm, I cannot without regret see so much talent employed and so much money wasted in producing imitations of it, which are erected in defiance of every principle of Gothic Art. Neither can I look without extreme sorrow on the obliteration of everything that is truthful or worthy of study in our noble cathedrals or beautiful parish churches; nor do I care to refrain from expressing my dissent from the system which is producing these deplorable results.’

After a sarcastic reference to the destruction and defacement that in thirty years have made our churches, abbeys, and cathedrals in a second sense memorials of the past, Mr. Fergusson declares that—‘ *All our grand old buildings are now clothed in falsehood, and all our new buildings aim only at deceiving.* If this is to continue, architecture in England is not worth writing about; but this work has been written that those who read it may be led to perceive how false and mistaken the principles are on which modern architecture is based, and how easy it would be to succeed, if we would only follow in the same path which has led to perfection in all countries of the world, and in all ages preceding that to which the history contained in this volume extends.’

This volume, and the two which have preceded it, are an index to the various schools and styles of architectural work; and if the student will accept them as a warning and a guide, and, rejecting modern buildings as ‘deceptions,’ will select some ‘true’ old work to draw and measure parts of it full-size, and stone by stone, an unexpected interest will probably arise. A new companionship will be discovered, and

where all might have seemed mechanical and tame, the stones will soon be felt to be alive. The spirit of the Master-Workman will be manifested in each curve and joint, and even in the very setting of the work ; his mental and artistic growth will be revealed ; a sympathetic art association will be gained with a true, manly, simple workman, and with a mind and method utterly removed from the 'refined' impostures that delude our much enlightened, cultivated age.

To those but little educated in the ways of art, the *Master-Workman* is a mystery ; his influence and existence are half doubted, half denied, or wholly misconceived. But history tells us that in every scene, or kind, or period of art, whenever it was true, original, and great, the workman was the master. His often questionable social status did not in the least affect his dominant position in the world of art ; and if we go to Athens, where art reached its ancient climax, and inquire what were the value and condition of an architect in Greece, Plato has furnished us with a complete reply. He says that 'you could 'buy' ( $\pi\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota\omega$ ) 'a common builder' ( $\tau\acute{e}\kappa\tau\omega\alpha$ ) 'for five or six 'minæ at most, but a master-workman' ( $\grave{\alpha}\rho\chi\iota\tau\acute{e}\kappa\tau\omega\alpha$ ) 'not even 'for ten thousand drachmæ, for there are few of them even 'among all the Greeks.'\* Thus in Plato's time—and he was born but three years after Phidias had died—the master-workman might in common conversation be referred to as a slave. He was a rare luxury, and so was worth above four hundred pounds, or twenty times the price of a mere labourer. This startling sum is quoted, not for some neophyte or unknown article, but for the very few selected 'among all the Greeks.'

The Greek 'architect' then was not a workman only, or even a chief workman ; he was the master-workman, or chief of the workmen. He was a simple workman in his origin, and probably by family descent, but, advanced to superintendence, he would 'make the plan, arrange the elevations, and 'be, in fact, the foreman of the work.' However, let us again

\* *Epa\sigma\tauai*, p. 135.

hear Plato. '*Eleatic Stranger*.—The master-workman does not 'work himself, but *is the ruler of workmen*.' 'He contributes 'knowledge, but not manual labour, and may, therefore, be 'justly said to share in theoretical science. But he ought not, 'when he has formed a judgment, to regard his functions as at 'an end, like the calculator; *he must assign to the individual workmen their appropriate task until they have completed the work*.'

The architect was, in fact, the foreman of the works. He 'formed a judgment,' that is, he decided on the plan or detail, and thus 'contributed knowledge and theoretical science.' He was 'the ruler of the workmen,' and so *must always have been upon the works*; and 'he assigned to the individual workmen 'their appropriate task,' and to do this he *must himself have been a workman*, as any jury of twelve working carpenters and masons would immediately declare. Thus, with the help of another 'chief' or two, Ictinus built the Parthenon; and four master-workmen were engaged on the foundations of the Temple of the Olympian Jove at Athens. If we imagine, then, a dozen architects employed on the foundations of the Law Courts, we shall recognize the difference between the ancient working foreman and the modern 'architect.'

It is further remarkable that we seldom read of a Greek architect who built more than one temple, and never do we find him engaged on more than one building at a time. We never hear of him as a draughtsman; but so frequently are architects called also carvers, that many must have been proficient in the plastic art. Theodorus, architect at Samos, was a modeller and carver; Callimachus, the inventor of the Corinthian capital, was of course a carver, and besides he was a goldsmith, an embosser and engraver, a maker of lamps, and, in fact, a very accomplished workman. Phidias was himself a carver, and his influence is visible in the refinement that distinguishes the Propylaea and the Parthenon; he was not, like a modern carver, a mere sub-contractor for the carver's work; but, as the noblest of the workmen, he was made by

Pericles the chief superintendent of the works, the architects or master-workmen being under him. Plutarch tells us that 'Phidias directed all, and was the overseer of all for Pericles. And yet the buildings had great architects and artists of the works; for the Parthenon was the work of Callicrates and Ictinus; and almost all things were in his hands, and, as we have said, he superintended all the artists.'

For three centuries there had been a gradual and moderate improvement in the architecture of Greek temples; but under the influence of Phidias this at once rose to perfection, and the absolute refinement of the outlines, curvatures, and mouldings, is the evident result of his more accurate perception, cultivated by his constant study of the human form. Phidias was not regarded as a draughtsman; his inscription on the colossal-chryso-elephantine statue at Elis was not 'Phidias designed,' but 'Phidias *made* me.' We hear nothing of his drawings, but only that he *worked* in marble, ivory, and gold, and this not in a 'study,' as we have somewhere seen, but in a workshop (*εργαστήριον*); and, though in artistic and imaginative power he was supreme, he did not fail to fully utilize the special skill of each less able workman; for 'in Greece especial excellence in art and handiwork of every kind was greatly prized; the best workman in the most humble craft might succeed in rendering his name immortal. Superior artists were distinguished by the surname godlike; and we are told that the Greeks were accustomed to pray the gods that their memories might never die.' \*

It is abundantly evident, then, that Greek art of all kinds was entirely and exclusively the product and expression of the workman; there is nothing in the slightest degree professional about it, nor have we evidence of any class of draughtsmen who prepared designs. Artists of the highest rank and greatest power lived at their work; Phidias was 'borrowed' by the Eleians to 'make' their statue of Olympian Jove, and Ictinus

and Callicrates 'built' the Parthenon ; that was their 'work.' The design, exquisite as it is, would have been a small affair for any draughtsman ; all the special merits of the work are quite beyond the draughtsman's sphere : they are the practical perfection of the improvements gradually made in former temples. The imagination and perception of the workmen had been trained by constant and hereditary use, and their effect was manifest in architectural as well as sculptured forms.

Let us now pass from Greece to Rome, and leave philosophers, and carvers, and the master-workman, for an author who is often quoted as the earliest advocate and representative of the architectural profession. Vitruvius was for centuries a classic among 'imitative' architects, who made believe that he was really an authority of weight in architectural affairs ; and so the laity have been persistently misled by the fictitious use of this man's worthy name. For instance, we are told that Vitruvius called architecture a fine art ; but he said nothing of the kind. In the first line of his treatise he declares that architecture is a 'science arising out of many 'other sciences, and adorned with much and varied learning.' Architecture is in practice thus transmuted, science takes the place of art, and instead of masters we shall now find only scholars. Vitruvius declares that he 'will lay down rules 'which may serve as an authority to those who build, as well 'as to those who are already somewhat acquainted with the 'science.' And so the good man's 'rules' have 'served as an 'authority,' and for nothing else ; they were, in fact, the law of the profession that was added because of transgression ; the inspiration of the workman had been lost, and the regulations of the schoolmaster were the necessary substitute. But wherever work that may be called Vitruvian has been done with demonstration of imaginative power, the good has been in spite of all Vitruvius has ruled, and by an inspiration such as he had not experienced or foreseen. The inspired workman *feels* the necessary, and for ever varying, rules of art ;

he does not learn them from a treatise, nor accept them as unchangeable and inexpensive.

Vitruvius also shows most clearly that among the Greeks the architect was the chief of the workmen, and personally superintended the work. Ctesiphon, for instance, contrived the apparatus for conveying the shafts of the columns which he had prepared for the Temple of Diana at Ephesus; the man was evidently the master-workman. Paeonius attempted the same method, but was unable to complete his contract.

Thus we have shown from Greek philosophy and Roman story that in building-work the first adviser was the master-workman, that he was the result of selection and culture; that he was a workman though a master; that he had coadjutors if not partners; that they personally superintended the buildings and the individual workmen, and were sometimes, if not always, contractors for the work. This was precisely the state and position of the medieval master-workman; the Greek method and the 'Gothic,' and, in fact, all true building methods, are essentially the same. The subtle curvatures in the lines of a Greek temple and the ornamentation, not casual or fortuitous, of a Gothic church, are the direct expression of the working men of various grades, but always present at the building; so that when building-work was true, excellent, and dignified, there were master-workmen, and now that it is 'clothed in falsehood,' 'aiming only at deceiving,' 'worthless,' and 'debased,' we have no chief of the builders, but only a chief of the clerks, whose aim and occupation is not about art, but only concerning luxury. The modern method is 'like cookery, wholly in the service of pleasure without regarding either the nature or the reason of the pleasure,' but the ancient practice 'has to do with the soul, the processes of art 'making a provision for the soul's highest interest.'

Nothing can be worse for the soul than a constant appeal to the low instincts and ignorant prejudices of a public greedy for luxuries and worshipping display; and yet, after centuries

of neglect and of admitted failure, we still continue to despise the workman, and vainly trust in the imposture that would fain imitate his works and thus pretend to take his place. It is the workman only that can efficiently perceive and feelingly originate the more subtle elements of good architectural design. Our dilettanti and composers talk of the Greek workman's work as if some special, superhuman power had wrought it, and to rival it were hopeless ; but if the modern workman would repudiate the foolish products of our modern 'civilizing arts,' and would work simply, with a pleasureable study of his work, he would in due time rival, and in some respects he might surpass, the Parthenon itself. But good imaginative work can never come of vanity and greed ; nor is there any hope for art in England while the public mind is subject to artistic superstitions. Until we get entirely rid of the fine words that have imposed upon the public, we shall not have sound knowledge and intelligent ideas. '*Fine art*,' for instance, is a term of fashion, and the fine gentlemen who got themselves dubbed 'dilettanti,' 'connoisseurs,' and 'men of taste,' used this superior epithet to scare the uninitiated and exclude 'the vulgar.'

'Art' used formerly to mean imaginative work, but now it means a trade. If art be now our aim and hope, we should abandon all this verbal folly ; art should be known as work, and not as the mere prefigurement of work : we should talk no more of sculptors and professors, architects and artists, but of carvers and master-masons, painters and braziers, carpenters and smiths. Instead of studios and offices we should get back to the prosaic workshop, the *έργαστήριον* of Phidias, the 'bottega' of Michael Angelo ; and we should recognize with due respect, and even with affectionate familiarity, such poor implements as the plain workman's bench and stool, the brazier and the forge. We should learn that the imagination of a man is to be used, not for the glorification of another's work, but that he may have pleasure in his own ; that his first duty is sound work, and that in this his highest object and

chief end should be the culture of the soul that has been given him for his particular development and constant care. When these are all admitted as the rights of man, we may begin to hope ; and soon, instead of fashionable vanities which 'fine art' now produces, we shall see again the genuine workman's work, all good and true, and in its excellence as fine as any relic of the Athenian school, or of the *unrestored* chief mason's work of Lincoln or of Wells.

Vitruvius and the Romans were but dilettanti in their patronage and practice of Greek art. The plain, coarse-minded, practical, and semi-scientific Roman workman, whether brick-layer or mason, was essentially a constructor, and the arch was with him worth all the orders. These he retained just as a fashion ; and in using them he treated poor Vitruvius and his 'rules' with scant respect. The workman first concerned himself with his arcades and domes, and lines and curvatures of plan, and used the orders as mere surface decorations, an artistic sop to gratify the Roman connoisseurs.

During the semi-classic period of the earlier Romanesque, the workman's more imaginative art was little used ; the plans of the basilicas were stereotyped, and very simple ; and the workmen had the slight amusement of assorting various capitals and columns for the nave and aisles, with some occasional and interesting efforts of design in capitals of sub-Corinthian form. But in the Lombard and Byzantine buildings there is ample evidence of the individual thought and handicraft of the inspired workmen and their chief ; the work is practical, and thoroughly artistic, the expression of direct thought acting on present material. The workman's mind and hand are seen throughout ; his thoughts are manifested as they rise. Changes of detail or of plan are prompt, open, and decided ; and at once, without the painful preparation of the schoolman or the office clerk, the utterance is given, and a new line of poetry is in a moment added to the refined, beneficent enjoyments of the world.

In looking at the east front of the Louvre, or at the western elevation of St. Paul's, we soon appreciate the harmony of studied composition and admire the grace of outline ; but no sympathy arises. The design, we know, was drawn by a magnificent composer, who prepared his classical and picturesque effects away in some dull room ; and of the men that did the work we never think at all. But when, after a long day's study of the Duomo that Buschetto built at Pisa, we retire to the shadow of the Baptistery to see the glorious front illuminated by the summer's setting sun, no thought arises of the bigness of the church, or of its cost, or even of its architectural effect as an imposing structure, but only of the workmen that so many centuries ago had made it ; we converse and sympathize directly with the master-workman and with all his men.\* In no one view perhaps is there so clear and multitudinous a sense of the true working artist's presence, where the stones seem cut and fixed in some instinctively harmonious way, each by a separate workman yet in perfect and spontaneous concert with a general design.

This is the climax of Italian medieval art ; the Parthenon at Athens also marked the final step of centuries of progress. Here the building-work was perfect in refinement, and the ideal forms of gods and heroes were conceived and worked in studious contemplation of supreme humanity. At Pisa there is varied work instead of perfect form, and with all reverence for the majesty of Attic art, perhaps we sympathize more quickly with the prompt and individual fancy of the homely Lombards. Much of the difference of the two styles was naturally due to the dimensions of the building stone. In Greece the massive blocks of stone and marble would induce severity of outline and colossal forms, but the work of Italy, at all times conscious of the arch, preferred small stones, and so gave greater liberty to all the workmen.

The building-work at Venice has been so well described

\* A.D. 1846. The front is now 'restored.'

that it is perfectly familiar even to the untravelled reader ; so we pass on to England, where the influence of the individual workman is as clear as at the Pisan Duomo. Thus, ‘Benedict, the Abbot of Wearmouth (A.D. 676), crossed the ‘ocean to Gaul, and brought back with him *stone-masons* to ‘make a church after the Roman fashion.’ Benedict also ‘sent to Gaul to bring over glass-makers, a kind of artificers ‘hitherto unknown in Britain, to close’ (i.e. with glass) ‘the ‘windows of the church. And they came and taught the ‘English nation thenceforth to know and learn an art so ‘well suited to the lanterns of the church and the vessels ‘for various uses.’ These working-men were leaders in the arts, and ‘taught the English nation ;’ the Newcastle glass-workers may claim descent from the few immigrants who twelve hundred years ago were settled by the Wear.

Again, Naitan, king of the Picts, sent to Abbot Ceolfrid, of Jarrow, asking him to send him ‘master-workmen (“archi-“tectos”) who might build among his own people a stone ‘church after the manner of the Romans ; and the most ‘reverend Ceolfrid sent him the master builders whom he re-‘quired.’ Naitan asked not for ‘an architect’ to build many churches, but for plural ‘architectos’ to build one church ; working foremen, in fact, or ‘master-workmen who should ‘assign to the individual workmen their appropriate tasks.’

The same method continues. In the reign of Edgar, the isle of Ramsey, in Huntingdonshire, belonged to a nobleman named Aylwine, ‘who was attracted to Oswald, Bishop of ‘Worcester, by the sanctity of his deportment ;’ and during a long and holy conversation with the Bishop, it came out that Aylwine, having been long ill, was cured by St. Benedict, and received a mission to erect a monastery in the island. Oswald having in his diocese ‘twelve brethren in one village ‘who had cast behind their backs the lusts of the flesh, and ‘were only warmed with divine love,’ and who would willingly undertake the charge, proposed, like the famous man of

business that he was, at once to go with Aylwine and inspect the place. And then, explaining to his companion that, 'while erecting there a temporary mansion, we shall also be erecting, if our faith fail not, a mansion eternal in the heavens; let us, said he, commence at once, lest the devil should take occasion of any delay to breathe a colder spirit upon us. Let me, therefore, send hither a certain man faithful and approved in such works, under whose management a little refectory and dormitory may be prepared.' Ædnothus was sent, who laid out the ground, enlarged the chapel, and added other buildings, according to Oswald's plan; and, having the care of all the out-door works, he during the winter provided the masons' tools of wood and and iron, and in the spring set out the plan of the foundations and dug out the ground; he was, in fact, the chief of the workmen; and he made a fine building of it. The age, however, was pre-scientific, uninstructed in geology, and, from want of good foundation probably, the central tower of the church began to crack. Ædnothus had to report this failure to Aylwine, who agreed to find the money for the restoration. The labourers then approached the tower by the roof, and, going stoutly to work, rased it to the very ground, dug out the treacherous earth, made the foundation sure, and again 'rejoiced to see the daily progress of the work.' What a contrast all this is to our present condition and practice! The nobleman 'attracted to the bishop by the sanctity of his 'deportment; ' the memory of the vow after recovery; the 'twelve brethren in one village who have cast behind their 'backs the lusts of the flesh; ' the fear of the '*cold* breath of 'the devil; ' a bishop who could make a plan, and the 'man 'faithful in works; ' the cleverness and alacrity of the labourers, and their 'rejoicing in the progress of their 'work,' are such a beatific vision that our retrospective view confirms the holy Oswald's prescient declaration, 'Verily, 'this is another Eden, preordained for men destined for the

‘highest heaven;’ a remark that has not reached our ears respecting any recent architectural effort.

Such was the system of artistic practice that for six centuries served to make England the finest scene of architectural display that the world ever saw. The workmen worked ‘after their manner;’ they were totally without extraneous artistic tutelage, and the people understood and appreciated the work, with no more consciousness or study than would be required for ordinary speech and conversation. The masons were, of course, largely employed on ecclesiastical buildings; not under the patronage of the clergy, however, but on the contrary rather patronizing them, as we find in a very interesting episode of ecclesiastical and architectural history:—

‘In the year of Grace one thousand one hundred and seventy-four, by the just but occult judgment of God, the Church of Christ at Canterbury was consumed by fire.’ The monks with due deliberation took good counsel how they might repair the church, but the masons, English and French, whom they consulted, varied in their advice. ‘However, there had come a certain William of Sens, a man active and ready, and, *as a workman, most skilful both in wood and stone.* Him, therefore, the monks retained, on account of his lively genius and good reputation. And to him, and to the providence of God, was the execution of the work committed. And he, residing many days with the monks, and carefully surveying the burnt walls in their upper and lower parts, within and without, did yet for some time conceal what he found necessary to be done, lest the truth should kill them in their present state of pusillanimity.

‘But he went on preparing all things that were needful for the work, either of himself or by the agency of others. And when the monks began to be somewhat comforted, he ventured to confess that the pillars rent with the fire, and all that they supported, must be destroyed, if the monks

‘ wished to have a safe and excellent building. At length they agreed, being convinced by reason, and wishing, above all things, to live in security.

‘ And now he addressed himself to the procuring of stone from beyond the sea. He constructed ingenious machines for loading and unloading ships, and for drawing cement and stones. He delivered moulds for shaping the stones to the sculptors who were assembled, and diligently prepared other things of the same kind.’

William of Sens, the master-workman, thus continued the old Athenian method, and ‘ assigned to the individual workmen their appropriate task.’ In the third year William had a bad fall with the scaffolding ; and being ‘ sorely bruised gave up the work, and, crossing the sea, returned to his home in France. And another succeeded him in the charge of his works, William by name, English by nation, small in body, ‘ but in workmanship of many kinds acute and honest.’ We quote two more lines for the sake of the italics :

‘ Now let us carefully examine what were the works of *our mason* in this seventh year from the fire.’

‘ In this eighth year *the master* erected eight interior pillars.’

Our readers will probably accept the above as conclusive evidence that the master-workman was a fact in English architectural history. William of Sens was no compiling copyist ; he was a man of thoughtful, independent mind, and was one of the earliest to adopt the pointed arch. We hear nothing of his drawings, but only of his moulds, for shaping the stones, which he himself delivered to the workmen.

Proceeding a step further, to the reign of Henry III., the culminating period of Early Pointed art, the famous Bishop, Robert Grosseteste, said that ‘ In all kinds of workmanship the master of the work and workmen has the full power, as indeed it is his duty, to investigate and examine, with the utmost diligence, the properties, the different qualities, and the suitability alike of his materials and of the implements

‘ necessary for the work ; and to make trial of the skill, dili-  
‘ gence, and trustworthiness of those that serve under him, so  
‘ that he may correct whatever is wrong or faulty. *And this*  
‘ *he should do, not only through others, but, when it is needful,*  
‘ *with his own hand.*’ This ‘ master of the work and workmen ’  
is the kind of man that built the choir at Westminster.

In France, at the same period, a master mason, Hues Libergiers, was architect of the, lamented, Abbey Church of St. Nicaise, at Rheims. He died in 1263 ; and in the cathedral is his tomb or monument, a sculptured stone. In the left hand of his effigy is a working builder’s measuring rod, and in the right hand, not a drawing, but a *model* of the church. On either side are carved a mason’s compasses and square. Libergiers’ dress is that of people of the lower middle-class, with a close working-mason’s cap completely covering the hair. A similar carved tomb and effigy, with *tools*, was placed above the grave of Pierre de Montereau, who, after building the Sainte Chapelle at Paris, and enjoying throughout life the confidence and friendship of the king, St. Louis, died in 1263.

Again, turning to the north, two centuries later, in the old burgh records of Aberdeen, there is a memorandum, dated May 4, 1484, relating how ‘ Master John Gray, mason, was  
‘ received by the alderman, baillies, council, and community  
‘ of Aberdeen as master of the work in the building of St.  
‘ Nicolas Church ; who has taken upon him to be continually  
‘ labouring and diligent for the upbringing of the said work,  
‘ both in labouring of his own person, devysing, beseeing and  
‘ overseeing of other masons and workmen that shall be  
‘ under him, for all the days of his life. For the which thing  
‘ to be done he has given the great bodily oath. And the  
‘ said master of work shall *labour* himself and see that other  
‘ workmen under him labour daily and continually ; and for  
‘ the which *labours* and service to be done by the said master  
‘ of work, the said alderman, baillies, council, and community  
‘ have promised to give yearly to the said master of work for

‘ his fee twenty pounds, and five marks as a present, for all expenses, and during all the days he has to live, until the said work be complete, to be paid to him at four terms of the year, proportionally, as he and they shall accord best thereupon.’

John Gray was, then, a labouring man, a chief director of the workmen, a resident devyisor, known to the whole community, a trusty man on his own oath, with whom they could undoubtingly ‘ accord.’

In medieval times, when travelling was difficult and ‘ good society’ was rare, the high-placed, well-born churchmen would require some gentle, pleasant recreation to enjoy in concert with their neighbours and subordinates, both clerical and lay. Building just served this purpose; and the amount of noble work that these men left as records of their ‘ piety’ makes it clear that art lost nothing by the absence of the drawing-master and his staff. In course of time a guild or craft arose, called the Freemasons, who were much employed on sacred buildings. These men were families of masons; and the secrets or the technicalities of building craft were, just as in ancient Greece, transmitted by inheritance; a true vernacular that never became taught, or formed itself into a science, but was a simple living art that constantly advanced. Hope tells us that ‘ Many ecclesiastics of the highest rank, abbots, prelates, and bishops, conferred additional weight on the order of freemasons by becoming its members; themselves superintending the construction of their churches. The masons, when they sought employment, had a chief surveyor who governed the whole troop, and appointed one man as warden over nine others. They built temporary huts round the site of their work, regularly organised their different departments, and sent for fresh supplies of men as they were required.’

Thus the surveyors and the wardens were again the ‘ master-workmen who assigned to each workman his appropriate task.’ In 1442 King Henry VI. became a mason, and spared

no pains to be a master of the art. The good example of the King was followed, very sensibly, by many of the nobility; and we subsequently find that the King had perfect aptitude and thorough knowledge of the craft. 'About twelve years before his death, the King, being at his palace of Westminster, went into the monastery church, and so forth to St. Edward's shrine within the same; where he pointed with his staff the length and breadth of his sepulture, and commanded a mason to be called, named Thirske, at that time *master mason* of the chapel of King Henry V., who, by the commandment of the King and in his presence, marked out the length and breadth of the said sepulture with an iron pickis which he had brought with him.'

Thirske, the master mason, was thus, evidently, a working man. A document was then prepared, 'containing the will and mind of the King in the devising of his sepulture,' and two messengers being sent to John Essex, head marbeller, in 'Powlys Chirchard,' he and Thomas Stevyns, coppersmith, of Gutter Lane, went to the King at Westminster, 'and bargained with him for his tomb to be made, and received of the King in part payment xi<sup>s</sup> in grotes.' The association for a king was doubtless very low, but kings and people in those times could find their common interest and delight in noble works of art.

Again, at Winchester, Walkelyn, the Bishop, began to rebuild the cathedral in A.D. 1079, and he built most nobly. His transepts are for impressiveness quite unsurpassed, but his name is little known compared with that of William of Wykeham, who was Bishop some three centuries later, and who is held to be the architectural hero of the Winton church. He was a man of business, clerk of the King's works, clever at accounts, princely in his munificence, and a friend of learning, great in his designs, but an abominable builder. The work at Winchester that he directed is but a desperate collapse of art; he touched nothing that he did not deface. The interior of the nave is a distinguished specimen of that

mechanical and costly commonplace which quickly charms the vulgar. If our readers will compare this fashionable work with the grand and simple Norman transepts, or with the noble nave of Romsey Abbey, they will begin perhaps to question whether New College is a sufficient expiation for such wholesale and irreparable vandalism. Wykeham, however, was not the architect who designed the work, as is so generally supposed, nor yet, of course, the master mason; he had merely been the intelligent but inartistic 'operarius' or chief director of the King's masons, 'whose special duty it was to 'make arrangements with the master of the works.'

In art is no exclusiveness or servitude; the interest and delight are common to the king, the public, and the handi-craftsman. Like poetry and science, art must be free, and in its own sphere supreme, or otherwise its spirit fades, and energy and life are lost. Rank, royalty, and riches may become the deferential, sympathizing friends of art, but not its masters or its fashionable guides. So, when the evil influence of which Wykeham was a representative became paramount, and ostentation was promoted above excellence, art retired; and the masons soon adopted the mechanical and hasty method of design now called the Perpendicular and Tudor styles. In these there is abundance of idea and of able workmanship, but the ideas are superficial, and the work, though neat and scientific, has but little individuality or true poetic feeling. All that the courtiers and the men of trade required was prompt achievement and vainglorious display, regardless of the dignity or degradation of the workmen.

But, not to limit our inquiry to England, let us hear what Mr. Street can tell us from beyond the sea, of medieval architects. In chapter xxi. of his work on Gothic Architecture in Spain, he says, 'Almost all the architects or masters of the 'works referred to in all the books I have examined seem to 'have been laymen, and just as much a distinct class as 'architects are at the present day.' This is, unfortunately,

their only similarity ; they are 'distinct,' but in a totally opposite way. Raymundo of Monforte, for instance, when employed by the Chapter of Lugo, A.D. 1129, 'was retained *solely for the work there.*' His salary was annual ; his engagement was for life. He is called in the contract not 'architect,' but 'master of the works, the title which, in course of time, was usually given to the architect ; though I am not inclined to think that it makes it impossible that he should also have worked with his own hands. Indeed, the very next notice of an architect is of one who certainly did act as 'sculptor on his own works. This was Mattheus, master of 'the works at Santiago Cathedral. Ferdinand II., A.D. 1168, 'granted him a pension of a hundred maravedis annually for 'the rest of his life ; and the fact proves, I think, the king's 'sense of the value of a fine church, and also somewhat as 'to the degree of importance which its designer may have 'attained to when he was recognized at all by the king. 'There can be no doubt that he had been acting there both as 'sculptor and architect ; and if *from a modern point of view he lost caste as an architect, he, no doubt, gained it as an artist.* 'Here, as at Lugo, the master of the works was appointed at 'a salary for his lifetime, and held his office precisely in the 'same way as do the surveyors of our own cathedrals at the 'present day.'

Mr. Street gets very much misled by his nomenclature. The king gave the pension not to the designer, but to the carver of the doorways. He would certainly have been perplexed if some draughtsman had been presented to him as the 'designer' of the work. The carver was, of course, the designer ; and Matthew wrote his name upon the lintels because he 'did the work.' Ferdinand appreciated well the relative importance of himself and Matthew, and he paid a proper tribute to the mason's great superiority. He saw that Heaven itself had recognized the master, and that the workman who conceived and wrought the Glory of St. James was a creator, and in

mental rank, in permanence of power and influence, and in nobility of work, above the patronizing recognition of a king. We do not hear that Phidias 'attained to importance' when 'he was recognized' by Pericles; but Titian is said to have been 'recognized' by Charles V. in a becoming way.

'In A.D. 1175, Raymundo, a "Lambardo," contracted to complete in seven years certain works in the Cathedral at Urgel, and was to be paid by a canon's portion for the rest of his life. The mode of payment, the engagement for life, and the absence of any reference to a master of works, lead, I think, to the conclusion that he was, in truth, the architect, but—this 'but' is very amusing—*but that he also superintended the execution of the works*, and contracted for the labour.'

'In A.D. 1203, one Pedro de Cumba is "Magister et fabricator," and there can be no doubt, therefore, that *he not only designed but executed the work*, which, as we go on, we shall find to have been a *not very uncommon custom*.' (O sancta simplicitas!)

Jacobo de Favariis, one of the architects employed at the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Gerona, 'was appointed in A.D. 1320-22, at a salary of two hundred and fifty sueldos a quarter, and under an agreement to come from Narbonne six times a year. Here we seem to have a distinct recognition of a class of men who were not workmen, but really and only superintendents of buildings; in fact, architects in the modern sense of the word.'

The word architect, then, has an ancient sense to contrast with its modern meaning; and, with Mr. Street's assistance we shall find that the old architects were persons of entirely different character and functions from their modern namesakes.

'About the same time Jayme Fabre appears to have been one of the greatest architects of his day. It is impossible to read the account of the completion of the shrine of Sta.

‘Eulalia at Barcelona without feeling that Fabre superintended a number of masons, and acted, in fact, as their foreman ; though this is no reason why he should not *also have designed the work they executed*. In the same year, at San Feliu Gerona, Pedro Zacoma, master of the works of the steeple, ‘was not to undertake any other works without permission. He ‘was to be paid by the day, with a yearly salary in addition. ‘He must have been employed constantly at the church, and ‘in such a building a man could hardly have been constantly ‘employed without *absolutely working as a mason.*’

This is conclusive. We have seen that the old architect and master-builder was a workman, that he designed the work, that he personally superintended it, and that he was constantly employed upon it ; and now Mr. Street adds that this could hardly have been the case without his actually working as a mason.

In A.D. 1416, Guillermo Boffi, master of the works of the Cathedral at Gerona, proposed to build a single nave of the same width as the choir and its aisles. The Chapter very prudently sought the advice of practical and able men on this bold, daring project ; and a dozen architects were asked for their opinions upon oath. Of these, ‘all but two called ‘themselves “Lapididæ.” One was “Magister sive sculptor ‘imaginum ;” and two only call themselves masters of the ‘works. Their answers seem to prove that they were all ‘men of considerable intelligence.

‘There cannot be a shadow of doubt that at the beginning ‘of the fifteenth century *most of the superintendents of buildings*, ‘in Cataluña at any rate, *were sculptors or masons also*. Their ‘own description of themselves is conclusive on this point ; at ‘the same time their answers are all given in the tone and ‘style of architects ; and it is quite certain that had there ‘been a superior class of men—architects only, in the modern ‘sense of the word—the Dean and Chapter would have applied ‘first of all to them.’

And thus we learn how ‘architecture in the modern sense’ does so impress itself on all mankind as ‘certainly superior’ to the medieval work of which it is, as our Historian announces; but a ‘Copying or Imitative Style.’ Mr. Street’s notions of superiority and his opinions about medieval Deans and Chapters appear, however, hardly to be justified by modern architectural evidence; but on the other hand his testimony is so frank and candid, so valuable and copious, that there is some difficulty in knowing how to select and when to make an end. We venture one or two quotations more.

‘In A.D. 1518, Domingo Urteaga contracted for the erection of a church at Cocentaina in Valencia. *He bound himself to go with his wife and family to Cocentaina.* He was to be every day at the work, having half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner in winter, and an hour and a half in summer.’ Clearly arrangements for a working man; and though Urteaga ‘was evidently only a foreman of the works, there is no reference to any superintendent or architect, and nothing is said about any plans which are to be followed. I conclude, therefore, that in this case *the foreman of works was really the architect.* Urteaga was to do all that a “master” ought in the management of such a work, and was to receive each day for himself five sueldos, and was to provide two assistants and two apprentices, the former to have three sueldos each, and the latter one and a half.’

Of Guillermo Sagrera, who was both builder and architect of the Exchange at Palma, Mr. Street remarks that ‘*He presented the plans himself*, and that there is no trace whatever of any architect or superintendent over him. It is doubted by some whether this mixture of the two offices of builder and architect was ever allowed in the middle ages, but Sagrera’s agreement is conclusive as regards this particular case; and we may be tolerably sure that *such a practice must have been a usual one*, or it would hardly have been adopted in the case of so important a building.

'The result that we arrive at after this *r  sum  * of the 'practice of Spanish architects is certainly that *it was utterly unlike the practice of our own day.*' And its productions also.

After this long excursion—and thanks to Mr. Street for his instructive guidance—let us return to England. In his valuable contribution to 'Gleanings from Westminster Abbey,' Mr. J. H. Parker says: 'This point of the necessity of a gang of skilled workmen accustomed to work together for the production of the great works of medieval art has not been sufficiently attended to. The fables of the Freemasons have produced a natural reaction, and the degree of truth which is in their traditions has consequently been overlooked. We know that each of our cathedrals had a gang of workmen attached to it in regular pay, almost as a part of the foundation, for the fabric fund could not be lawfully devoted to any other purpose; and these workmen became by long practice very skilful, more especially the workers in, and the carvers of, free-stone, as distinct from the labourers, who merely laid the rubble-work for the foundations and rough part of the fabric. From various indications it would seem that there was a royal gang of workmen in the king's pay by whom the great works ordered, and perhaps designed by the *king himself* (*such being the complete diffusion of architectural taste and knowledge*), were constructed. The wills of Henry VI. and Henry VII. seem to show that these monarchs were at least, to some extent, architects themselves; they give the most minute directions for the works to be done, just as any architect might have done. St. George's, King's College, and Henry the Seventh's Chapel, were all probably built by the royal gang of masons.'

With this we close our English evidence from medieval work and records. We have continuous proof that in the west of Europe and throughout the middle ages the master-workman was the designer of the buildings. Even so late as the seventeenth century, when the Renaissance was developed nearly to

the full, we find that Wadham College Chapel was designed and built by a small gang of working masons brought from Somersetshire. But in Italy, three hundred years before, a draughtsman was employed to make a fine design for foolish work, and then the decadence of architecture had begun. Giotto, the most inspired as well as most extensive painter of his age, was a wall decorator, a master-workman, full of fancy, and with visions of human sentiment and beauty constantly before him. These he depicted on the new, wet plaster, and as fresco pictures they remain his nobler kind of workmanship. But in a conventional and decorative painter's way he also imitated wooden panelling, and marbles, and mosaic-work; and when the Florentines, smitten with vanity and pride of purse, resolved to make a tower, not simply as a thing of beauty, but 'to exceed in magnificence, height, and excellence of workmanship, whatever of the kind had been achieved by Greeks and 'Romans,' Giotto was engaged as the 'Capo Maestro,' *at a yearly salary of one hundred florins in gold*; and *he was not to leave Florence*. His commission and his business object were to satisfy vain people with a vain display. Unlike the Athenians, who, when they undertook to build the Parthenon, had no idea of rivalling the Rameseum, or the Pyramids; they sought to exceed, not others, but themselves: 'and, as 'the works arose, inimitable in form and grace, the makers 'vied to excel the handiwork itself by the beauty of their art.'

Giotto, therefore, having made a superficial pattern in the manner of a wall decorator, and not of a chief builder or a master mason, carefully prepared a model of the tower, marking in the joints and colour of the marble work. The panelling and inlaid work are an elaborate and costly copy of the cheap, facile painter's work, itself an imitation, that Giotto used to cover his inferior wall surfaces and enframe his fresco pictures. It is 'exquisite,' but it is not architecture; it is, in fact, an early exhibition of the 'Imitative Style.' The enrichment which should be a developed grace and an occasional efflorescence on a huge

tible public building that the architectural profession has achieved.

It is necessary to bear in mind that medieval building and modern architecture are two essentially and practically different things. The one was wholly workmen's work, the other is but a fine name adopted by a spurious—we had almost said—a quack profession. The modern 'chief builder' is, in fact, no builder at all, but only a drawing-master: the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, and the Italian and Western 'Goths' were cultivated workmen, who invented or designed their work. Old Roman architecture was in great part imitation work, and often bad; but the Renaissance Italian is the professional style; with it the profession of architecture became established; its foundation was a knowledge of the 'orders,' and its practice was that of composing these orders in various fanciful displays; in fact, it might be called a school of architectural posture-making and deportment. Any draughtsman, with a reasonable knowledge of these orders, might become an architect; and with an eye for outline, and some cleverness in arrangement, he might produce on paper an endless variety of 'classical' combinations. The style was expensive, but when it arose questions of expense were of secondary importance: it was, somehow, seldom the proprietor that had to pay the bill. But the great success of the style was due neither to its novelty nor its variety, but to the facility with which the architect could prepare, at any distance from the work, the drawings for an entire building; and to the very little personal superintendence by the draughtsman that the work required. Instead of giving his entire attention to one building, the accomplished drawing-master found that he could take commissions for a dozen or a score. The amount of drawing in each case was comparatively small; a little shuffling of columns and windows revealed some new accident of combination that passed for design; and as for detail, the classic orders served for all. Thus then all

parties were well pleased ; the employer was in the fashion, and piqued himself on his classic refinement and exceptional 'good taste' : the architect had large practice in a gentlemanly profession : and both, with the vanity and self-gratulation of ignorant conceit, could despise the Duomo of Pisa or the Choir of Westminster, as the rude relics of a barbarous and unenlightened age.

In England Vanbrugh and Lord Burlington have made us see how quickly men of literary culture, and of noble rank, could master the designing knack, and then provide new luxuries of architectural magnificence to put their wondering and confiding friends on the high road to ruin. Blenheim House is critically known as 'picturesque,' but it is a scene rather than a dwelling ; there may be a house imbedded in the stonework, but the real effect, which is geological rather than architectural, more suggestive of a quarry than of a palace or a home, is due entirely to non-essentials, to the mass of superfluous material symmetrically disposed, and yet altogether hideous and unseemly ; in fact a sort of architectural elephantiasis. Burlington House, though exotic in style, was a very respectable and praiseworthy effort ; and the colonnade was no doubt a grateful memento of the Italian tour. Both the houses have been much admired, and may be acknowledged to reflect great credit on the professional skill of their respective designers.

Gradually, however, the 'classic' enthusiasm wore away ; the style ceased to be new, and it was found to be costly ; and when what is called the Grecian style had passed through its brief period of public favour, and urgent want arose for some new thing, it happened that a few careful publications about Gothic work appeared, and gained the attention of the 'artistic' world. Here, then, was another chance for the profession ; the style was not new, but it was practically unfamiliar ; and though it was made or developed by working masons at a time when there was no classical artistic

nor did he make his work subordinate to ecclesiastical pretension; but at St. Mark's he used his monolithic marble-shafts, his brightest colours, and his choicest pictures of mosaic-work and gold upon the front, the portals, and most public portions of the church; and thus his workman's inspiration has become a permanent ennobling charm for all men.

Most people suffer somewhat from magnificence upon the brain, and hence the safety of society is greatly due to the incompetence of men to carry out their vast designs. The Florentines were sadly subject to this overleaping impulse; and in consequence their buildings seldom reached completion. But for the Duomo they resolved 'to raise the loftiest, 'most sumptuous, and most magnificent pile that human invention could devise or human labour execute.' The result of all this sumptuous determination is Arnolfo's ghastly nave, in which it seems Giotto had some hand, and, as a suitable climacteric, the dismal cupola that, four generations later, Brunelleschi raised. And so throughout the Renaissance we find that, in architecture, sumptuousness and engineering, domes and marbles, entirely superseded noble work. Italian medieval architecture was in fact ruined by marble-work; stone and the artistic mason were neglected, and costliness and polished smoothness were esteemed the elements of art. In carving, however, and in tombs and monuments, the workman still for centuries maintained his masterful condition.

We know that Michael Angelo declared and signed himself a 'carver,' but at clerical suggestion he sometimes, like Giotto, left his special work and aptitude to make designs for buildings. The Farnese Palace has no doubt a handsome elevation, that is to say, it is agreeable to look at for a moment, and then to be well rid of. Who can help pitying the owner of that dismal cube of stone-work when he came in sight of it as his domestic home? The general design is worth some admiration upon paper; the architect who com-

pleted the exterior had consummate knowledge of the influence of proportion, boundless wealth to work with, and the Colosseum for a quarry. Moreover *he was present at the work*, and so careful of the details that he had them formed in wood full size, and tested on the building. Still the palace is but a domestic misery, cheerless as a prison, and, incapable of human sympathy or popular delight; the stones are evidently dead, they had no inspiration from the workmen.

Michael Angelo, much against his will, was ordered by the Pope to decorate the Sistine chapel ceiling. The idea of such decoration is of course absurd; Giotto, the working plaster painter, knew much better than to perpetrate such waste, and at the Arena chapel he made the ceiling a plain azure, that would serve by contrast to increase the effect of colour in his paintings on the walls. Michael Angelo's commission was not given from any love of art, but as a means of personal distinction and of hierarchical display. Julius had no wish to patronize the arts, but only to make use of them to glorify himself, and he impressed poor Michael Angelo just as he might enlist a leader of trained bands. This was the true spirit of the Revival; art was to be no longer an unobtrusive quiet ordinary work, but must be treated as a slavish luxury, and be compelled to illustrate the wayward whimsies of the Papal churchmen. But Michael Angelo actually *worked* at the Sistine chapel ceiling; not merely furnishing the plan and drawings, but himself 'fresh painting' all the plaster. He was the inspired workman; but as he was a carver and not a practised decorator, he designed the ceiling in a technically unskilful way. He could draw and mould the human form with masterly precision, but when he ventured into architectural details, he, pardonably, missed the true artist method; and so his pictures on the ceiling are surrounded by a barbarous medley of Renaissance forms, a half-pretence of solid architecture, absurd in principle, and clumsy in effect.

How the medieval and the ancient decorative painters could conventionalise the forms of building-work, and subordinate them to the requirements of art, is shown in Giotto's pictures and the Pompeian frescoes; but the 'architectural' painting on the Loggie ceilings in the Vatican shows how little Raphael had discovered of the sense and scope of decorative art.

Both Michael Angelo and Raphael were in some things servants to the fashion of the day; their buildings were designed, as of necessity when power of wealth and power of mind were ample, with much dignity and grace; but in the details their unworkmanlike contrivances proclaim the whole to be a fiction, a mere imitative art. To Michael Angelo the Renaissance Italian style was a dead language, and to his workmen it was but an unknown tongue; the master and his men were equally unable to express themselves artistically in such a fabricated dialect; and from St. Peter's to the latest building of 'New Rome,' Italian architecture is but a dreary evidence of luxury, a record of expenditure and folly. True, there is art in Italy, and of the best; but Italy is still the great world's show of architectural rubbish, and this rubbish is exactly what our travelled people most extol, and feebly seek to imitate.

In Germany, some sixty years ago, an ancient vellum drawing of Cologne Cathedral was discovered; this was, perhaps, the original design, or a contemporary copy, and its elaboration and completeness well account for the demerits of the building. It is a student's effort, the result of knowledge and selection; and its evident intention was to make a church supreme in size, and height, and symmetry of form. All this has been attained, but in human sympathy and true poetic art the building is a failure; it is, perhaps, the largest church of Gothic commonplace that ever was constructed, and for artistic worth is not to be compared with St. Stephen's at Vienna, the choir at Westminster, or a hundred still exist-

ing abbeys and cathedrals. The design was made when Amiens, Rouen, Rheims, and Notre Dame Cathedrals were still new. These were all built by masons who made drawings quite subservient to their work of art; but at Cologne the draughtsman spirit ruled, and so the masons used their common knack without a thought of poetry or touch of life. Cologne Minster is, again, a previous example of what Mr. Fergusson has called the Imitative Styles. On the projected spires the details are extravagant in size, the crowning finials are much larger than the open archway of the Minster doors. This is not mason's work or architecture, but a clear evidence of draughtsmanship, and of imaginative incapacity.

On the resumption of the Minster works there was a festal gathering; and there, most prominently placed, was every workman then employed upon the church, from the chief-master to the quarryman's apprentice. 'And, turning to the 'artizans, the Dom-Baumeister bade them prove their skill, 'concluding a manly, honest address with the sentiment of 'Schiller's "Song of the Bell"—

"Let praise be to the workman given,  
But the blessing comes from Heaven."

With us the drawing-master, not the workman, gets the praise; and so, it seems, the blessing does *not* come.

The public hear Cologne Cathedral called the culminating effort and display of medieval art; and, knowing and mis-trusting their own ignorance, they accept the dicta of the connoisseurs, and strenuously endeavour to be pleased. Of course they fail; and, finding nothing lovely or of interest, they leave the church in blank amazement at its height and bigness, and perplexed at what they modestly assume to be their own deficiency in architectural discernment. The work is a gigantic folly, and a total waste, unless it proves a warning.

Let us contrast with this our own old English building

method which but sixty years ago was not extinct. About that time the exterior of Henry VII.'s chapel was restored, and there we find the master mason still a power. 'There was but little occasion for the interference of the architect; all the labour of arranging the work, tracing out the details and ornaments, and supplying the defects from corresponding parts, being left *to the discretion and industry of the mason*. The task was an important one; and required professional skill, a practised eye, and sound judgment. It is no eulogium to say that the execution of this work could not have been entrusted to a more careful artizan than 'Mr. Gayfere.' This was Thomas Gayfere, mason of the Abbey. The Abbey, then, was built by masons, its noble tombs were made and were designed by working men, and the most lavish work was capably restored by a discreet industrious mason.

The habitual notion of the middle and superior classes that the workmen are inferior in natural ability, or in the higher qualities of lively genius and imaginative mind, is very English. In fact, these men are frequently above 'their 'bettters' in power of mental application and endurance. The man that makes a table or a chair requires more nervous energy than the glib shopman offering it for sale; a banquer mason or a leading joiner is, by profession, greatly more accomplished than a small tradesman or a banker's clerk. The workman's only want is to regain his old and natural position, and secure the opportunity to make his capabilities and acquirements felt and known. Where this is given, even to a mill-hand, or machinist, or a manufacturing engineer, his mental power becomes magnificent. Of the seven hundred patents for our hosiery and lace machines, every inventor except two has been recorded as a *working* handicraftsman. Or if we rise above mechanics, and proceed from manufacturing England to the land of poetry and song, these arts are the acknowledged birthright of the people; not only

of a Dante, a Manzoni, a Palestrina, or a Mario, but of the vinedressers of Bronte, and the peasantry of Viaggiano; of the plaintive cantatore of the Bay of Naples, and of the wandering herdsman on the Tuscan Apennines.

Remaining still in Italy, and studying Baron Hübner's general view of Rome three hundred years ago, we find that when Pope Sixtus, the last man of great commanding power on the Papal throne, proposed to build, he did not choose an architect or draughtsman, but engaged a young Comascho mason as his master builder. 'He and the young Fontana *together* formed plans, discussed and settled them.' When it had been proposed to raise the obelisk of Nero in the centre of the piazza of St. Peter, 'Michael Angelo and San Gallo, 'who were the first architects of the day, were unanimous 'in declaring the undertaking to be impracticable. Their 'opinion being law,' the idea was given up. Fontana afterwards designed a plan which was accepted; but, as the mason was still young, two 'architects of eminence' were ordered by the Commission to carry out the work. Fontana appealing to the Pope, declared 'that *no man can better carry out a plan than the man who has conceived it, for no one can perfectly master the thoughts of another.*' Struck by the justice of this remark, Sixtus intrusted the whole business to his former mason. Not only Rome, but the whole of Europe, watched the works with anxious curiosity, and on September 10, 1586, the obelisk was erected on its pedestal with perfect success.

Going with Mr. Fergusson still further south, to work entirely recent, we discover in the 'parish church of Mousa, 'in the island of Malta, a remarkable instance of a building 'erected in the same manner, and according to the exact 'principles which covered Europe with beautiful edifices during 'the middle ages. The real architect of the building was 'the village mason, Angelo Gatt. Like a master mason in 'the middle ages, or those men who build the most exquisite

‘tombs or temples in India at the present day, *he can neither read nor write nor draw*; but, following his own constructive instincts, and the dictates of common sense, he has successfully carried out every part of this building. It was he who insisted on erecting the dome without scaffolding, and showed how it could be done by simply notching each course on to the one below it. With true medieval enthusiasm, he was content to devote his whole time to the erection of this great edifice, receiving only fifteen pence a day for twenty years.’

The area of this master mason’s self-supporting dome is one-third larger than that of our architectural sham and wonder at St. Paul’s, and the height is greater than that of the Pantheon at Rome. The total cost was one-and-twenty thousand pounds, ‘besides the gratuitous labour of the villagers and others, estimated at half that amount.’ But in the decorative details Gatt received some painful help; and so, in this respect, the building is in superficial character a specimen of ‘Imitative Architecture.’

George Kemp, the architect of the Scott monument at Edinburgh, was but a village carpenter, and so was much objected to by his superiors; who desired that some ‘professional’ of eminence should be employed, and not a common man of great ability, whose work and powers were much above their mental range. Kemp was a composer only of the ‘inferior class,’ and yet his composition is superior in every quality, except expensiveness, to the memorial in Hyde Park.

The late Augustus Welby Pugin was a noted ‘architect,’ and able as a draughtsman, and so to some might seem to be an illustration adverse to our theory. But Pugin was much more than a draughtsman. ‘The most careful discipline and training after academic methods will fail in making an artist, unless he himself take an active part in the work. Like every highly cultivated man, he must be self-educated. When Pugin, who was brought up in his father’s office, had learnt all that he could of architecture, according to the usual

' formulas, he still found that he had learnt but little, and that ' he must begin at the beginning *and pass through the discipline of labour.* He hired himself out as a common carpenter at ' Covent Garden Theatre, and thus acquired a familiarity with ' work.' (Smiles, ' Self-Help.')

Pugin was apparently an artist spoilt. Had he discarded instruments and kept to tools, he might have reached his natural position, and become a famous master-workman. His architectural and decorative works all show exceptional ability in their inferior way ; but none are really good. His church at Ramsgate, where he was, in fact, the master, is by far the best, and is his worthiest monument. Who can tell how different his fate might possibly have been had he secured the quiet, soothing influence of true artist life, instead of suffering the vexation and excitement of a pluralist and quack profession ?

We may now quote the latest instance of true building master-workmanship. The Portcullis Club, 93, Regent Street, Westminster, ' is a working-man's club in the strictest sense ' of the word. The ground upon which it stands has been ' purchased, the materials of which it is built have been paid ' for, and the labour has been found by the working men them- ' selves, many of them working until twelve o'clock at night. ' Not only so ; they have been their own architects. The whole ' of the plans and elevations have been beautifully drawn by ' one of the members ; ' and thus the little front is much more satisfactory and respectable than the Charing Cross Hotel or the Royal Academy façade.

These are examples of mere accidental gleams of truth in modern practice, and they show that the return to sanity in art is by a very short and easy way. And now, continuing the method of historical comparison, that discovers art to be in every age the exclusive trust and treasure of the workman, let us go back four thousand years to the Egyptian tombs, and hear ' the dead lift up his voice to tell us of his life.' Thus Menter-Hotep, chief architect of King Usurtasen I., of the

XIIth dynasty, an epoch in Egyptian art, tells us that he was '*very skilful in artistic work with his own hands; he carried out his designs as they ought to be done.*' Ameni, a great functionary, has inscribed upon his tomb the record of his own administration, and therein reveals the generous influence of the master-workman in a wider sphere. 'All the lands under me were ploughed and sown from north to south. Thanks were given to me on behalf of the royal house for the fat cattle which I collected. Nothing was ever stolen out of my workshops. *I worked myself, and kept the whole province at work.* Famine never occurred in my time, nor did I let any one hunger in years of short produce; never did I disturb the fisherman or molest the shepherd. Never was a child afflicted, never a widow ill-treated by me; and I have not preferred the great to the small in the judgments I have given.' And on the wall are durably depicted illustrations of Ameni's works: *the building and lading of large ships*, the fashioning of furniture from costly woods, the preparation of garments, and the various scenes of husbandry and handicraft. Of the comparative value and intelligence of the Egyptian workmen, the three great Memphian Pyramids, the oldest monuments extant of building art, give curious and simple evidence. 'The slope of the entrance-passages is just the angle of rest for such material as the stone of the Pyramids, and, therefore, the proper inclination for the sarcophagus to be easily moved without letting it descend of itself.' Our readers, possibly, may recollect 'the launch' of the *Great Eastern*, and 'the angle of rest' and immobility that our engineer of eminence 'designed.' Had common workmen used their own responsible intelligence about the work, the recent 'builders of large ships' upon the foreshore of the Thames might not have proved inferior to the working engineers and architects who built the wondrous mausoleums in the valley of the Nile.

The failure and the remedy have been at length discovered. At the Engineering College, Cooper's Hill, Lord Salisbury, in

the true spirit of an Operarius, and of the Master Workman, advised the students 'not to be afraid, but to cultivate a knowledge of the smaller, and what he might call the more repulsive (?) details of their profession. He was very glad to see that the attendance in the workshops was spoken of in the very highest terms by the examiners. There has been hitherto no lack of the most distinguished theoretical knowledge, but the deficiencies have been in those small practical matters on which the success of the work often depends.'

Our history of the Master-Workman is complete. His method and position have been traced throughout the course of European culture. To him we are indebted for the glories of the Athenian Acropolis, the splendour of the Venetian Basilica, the dignity of the Lombard Duomo, and the infinite variety and charm of medieval building-work. The old method still survives in Oriental manufacture, and here again we find the modern workman painfully surpassed by his more 'educated' Indian rival. In the International Exhibition at South Kensington, 'it was humiliating to our national pride to perceive in the specimens of Indian art workmanship a grace and finish to which we cannot attain in spite of all our modern discoveries and appliances of mechanism daily becoming more delicate in their operation. The Indian worker in gold or silver produces the most elaborate and beautiful objects with the rudest tools, and as long as we leave him to himself his models are purely artistic, but as soon as he attempts to produce European articles from our designs the individuality of the artist is lost, and his work is vulgarised.'—Companion to the British Almanack, 1872.

Those who, as votaries of art, explored the World's Show at Vienna in 1873, will admit the general truth of these remarks; the Japanese display of art made ours look pitiful. In Japan the true style and method of art decoration are maintained; the porcelain and the painting are, in artistic combination, but one work. In our Bond Street china, the fine paintings

on the plates and vases are mere pictures, quite distinct from pottery, and only gain some prettiness and polish from the soft glaze and texture of the ware ; but they are no more to be styled ceramic art than any portrait on a panel or on copper can be classed with the productions of the joiner or the smith. It is painful to observe that in Japan, just as in India, the attempt to manufacture for the European market is corrupting the artistic workmen. At Vienna in the Oriental courts there was sad evidence of the debasing influence of 'Western culture.'

Much wonderment and admiration have been frequently expressed at what we in a patronizing way are pleased to call the almost Occidental cleverness of our new friends the Japanese. The cause of their ability is obvious. The people of Japan for many hundred years 'have placed the handi-craftsman, down to the humblest, above the merchant and 'the trader in the social scale ;' they have steadily maintained the artistic and imaginative training of their workmen, and as a consequence, or a concurrent influence and result, the population has retained its natural intelligence, and is apt to think quick in fancy and imagination, and therefore prompt to adopt and to improve ; and at Vienna their artistic workmen made the most refined display of decorative workmanship that Europe ever saw. The works of Luca della Robbia and of Palissy will show, however, that Japan has no exclusive artist power. 'The metal jugs of all sizes which abound on the Continent 'are models of undesigned art. Equally good, though a little 'less simple, is the rough blue and white stone ware of the 'South of France.' But we in England make the able potter a neglected underling of some great manufacturing firm, whose customers and show-rooms are a hundred miles away. With such a system no designs by Flaxman will make 'works of 'art,' nor raise our pottery above mere toy-work and a trade.

Perhaps it may be said that to employ an ordinary workman would imply the loss of all the luxury, the elegance, and the

refinement of our modern civilizing arts. This is the current talk, and really merits a reply like Hotspur's to the popinjay. Of course the trash that fills the Bond Street shops would disappear; and houses, churches, dress, and furniture would all be changed from foppish finery to dignified imaginative art. The 'charming' luxuries that the fashionable world demands have almost always been the work and the contrivance of the common and perverted artisan; the tradesman only sells the goods, the workman finds the brains.

The remedy is obvious, and involves no suffering or abnegation. The public, of whatever sort or grade, should, like the medieval aristocracy and kings, aspire to cultivate the social and artistic friendship of the master-workman. This is already done in other arts, and barber surgeons, and the quacks of former days, have given place to those who 'do the work' of healing. In some respects, however, the condition and the progress of the world have been most curiously inverted since the middle ages. In those times the public mind was greatly conversant with building art, and, being free and bright in thought, the natural result was excellence in work; but in theology it was comparatively dark, and subject to the superstition of the Papacy. Now, on the contrary, the English mind asserts its liberty in theological affairs, but in respect of art it is benighted. The present period of artistic imbecility would merit the contempt of those great working men who lived in ages that the vulgar have assumed to be uncivilized and 'dark.'

Our working men have no respect or sympathy for those who call themselves their 'chiefs;' and as a serious, direct result of want of interest in their work, we find that workmen do considerably less per hour, in quantity and quality, than they accomplished thirty years ago. An independent 'master,' with associated workmen, would do much more and better work than a commercial builder, dealing with hirelings, and habitually subject to trade jealousies and strikes. The saving

to society would be immense ; the money that is wasted on our buildings, public and private, would suffice to lodge us all like princes. ‘The directors of the Improved Industrial ‘Dwellings Company Limited have been erecting some dwellings by the employment of their own work-people, under a ‘competent foreman, and thus far the experiment has worked ‘satisfactorily. Greater care and attention being bestowed ‘upon the details of the work, the expenses of repairs will, it ‘is believed, be much less in these buildings.’ Lord Shaftesbury and some other gentlemen have, in a way of business, helped to build a little town of houses near the Wandsworth Road. ‘The architect has been a working foreman, and, to a ‘great extent, the builders are the occupiers of the houses. ‘Men of each trade were “pressed for their ideas,” and the ‘result has shown the amount of practical ingenuity that can ‘be brought by an intelligent community of working men into ‘a work on which their hearts are set.’ Each man, however, should possess and care for his own freehold. The occasional correspondence in the daily papers makes us see that in their architectural affairs our modern Englishmen are ‘mostly fools,’ and this especially in their consent to live in leasehold houses. Art never can exist on such a tenure. We could distinctly show its bad effect, not on architecture only, but on the sister arts of sculpture, metal work, and painting ; each has sunk, is sinking, and will sink, unless the firm and stable freehold tenure is restored. No one can think of any of our fine old buildings, sacred or secular, as leaseholds, nor will substantial houses be constructed upon leasehold ground ; and when the public understand that individual benefit and the general good are equally involved in freehold tenure, all proprietors will join in a demand for such legislation, essentially conservative, as would allow, and, if required, compel urban enfranchisement. The project has its precedents ; and tithe-commutation, copyhold enfranchisement, and canal and railway Acts, have made the public and the lawyers understand

that the proprietors of land encumbrances, and ground rents, may be forced to sell, and yet be very willing vendors.

Thus we have sought to teach the student how to recognize the only path that leads to excellence in art; to explain the reason why the old building-work, so often glorious, is always good, and why our modern work, though clever and correct in imitation or design, is everywhere, and must be, radically bad; and so to prove and illustrate the doctrine of the workman's mastery.

Our plea is naturally made with special reference to the interest of cultivated men in human progress; and, most obviously, in the building art. This seems to justify a strong deliverance; and is our great encouragement to speak aloud. And so, by friendly frankness, we have hoped to arouse the attention of the thoughtful public, and to lead them to perceive how greatly the advancement of the intellectual and moral state of man, and the true dignity and influence of art, must be affected by the full development of the abundant 'lively 'genius of the workman.' As this appeal is not perfunctory, but earnest, it may be made with little reticence, and yet with much respect for those whose audience and help are claimed. This freedom we have used with generous confidence and candour; not seeking to reveal some undiscovered fault, but only to describe the cause and nature of an error that is great and obvious; and then, with firm assurance modestly expressed, to indicate and justify the remedy.

And now we venture to assume that all our readers recognize the historic status, and the artistic value, of the Master-Workman, and perceive that to ignore him and to restrict the exercise of his imagination in his work is a fraud on human nature, and injurious to all men. The fact is evident; unhappily our present working classes are profoundly vulgar; the increase of wages and of general comfort does not much improve them, and instruction only serves to give them larger means to demonstrate their coarseness. Those who know them in their

houses tell us that as wages rise they revel in expensive luxury and display. In this they imitate their betters; the debasement of imagination is a striking characteristic of society, and may be traced from the mean finery of a mechanic's parlour straight to the pompous rubbish that surrounds a duke. Learning is no efficient substitute or supplement, for without imagination 'every man is brutish in his knowledge.' We do not undervalue what is now called education, but we object entirely to the misuse of the word. The result of all our Education Acts is not education, but mere teaching and the gift of knowledge; there is something imparted, not educed. But it is not that which goeth into a man, but that which cometh out of him, that defiles or purifies, ennobles or degrades him; and while we merely give him knowledge, and prohibit individual interest and expression in his work, the operative still remains but a degraded though intelligent machine, and the agricultural labourer is in every sense made only to *follow* the plough.

The object of all education is the improvement of the *moral* of the man. Instruction in literature and science sharpens his intellect, and technical instruction, now required by middle-class employers for economic reasons, good in themselves, but socially and philosophically selfish, may increase the workman's value as a tool; but true art workmanship is generous in every way, and in its nature is like mercy, blessing him that gives as well as him that takes. It gives a constant opportunity and wholesome exercise for their imagination to the great fundamental class of working men; and, elevating these, it raises all humanity. Much of the congratulation that we hear about advancing wealth and science, and mechanical improvement, is truly relevant to nothing but advance. The progress is in most cases grovelling and low. Men are not better for it all, but only better off. Will any who have known our Universities these twenty, thirty, forty years, tell us that the more recent men have been of a dis-

tinctly higher stamp than those who had preceded them? Is not the proportion of self-culture for its own sake greatly reduced, and the pursuit of learning very much become a hunt for fellowships, or, as upon the turf, to get well placed? This all requires abatement and correction, and the change, as in most moral revolutions, must be made not in the upper but among the lower orders of society. Morals do not descend; and Christianity was proclaimed, and first received, among the poor.

The workmen are our masters, and, we hear, should be instructed; what if this instruction should but lead them to increasing aptitude for selfishness and base enjoyment, and the whole political machine should be a means of levelling the people down to a low state of rude or polished luxury? Nothing can be more dangerous and prejudicial to the State than the neglect of the imaginative power among men. For many years greed has been blessed, and honoured, and exalted to the position of a peace-maker; but greed never has maintained a nation's self-respect and dignity; and it is only by the cultivation of the noble qualities of imagination, which rise greatly above greed, and, seeking true nobility, find it in work and sacrifice, that the position of England as a leader among the nations can be secured and made a blessing. If their imagination is not thus developed, working men, the more they are instructed, will become increasingly abnoxious and depraved; and vulgar knowingness, and vain, impatient levity will, as in other regions, be the ruling characteristics of the people.

Modern working men are impotent in all that most concerns nobility of work. They are acute and clever to a folly about pay, but for all else their minds have been crushed out of them; and in the great and many-sided building trade, ubiquitous and constant in its movement, the whole class of artizans is sunk into the lowest state of mental and imaginative feebleness. We have given to the workman power in political affairs, but we entirely deny his right and special fit-

ness to direct his own. He obtains his share numerically in the election of the Government that rules us all, but he is counted quite incapable to manage his own work ; and, like a beast of burden or a child, is put in harness or in leading-strings, and reined and guided, blinkered and controlled.

There is no question how the working man must be improved ; he must first be recognized. Let us suppose that some successful picture-dealer were to quote the various paintings in his gallery as his own productions, the respective names and individuality of all the painters being disregarded, and we shall understand at once the unnatural condition of our builders, and perceive how certainly the decadence of painting would result from such oblivious folly. This, notwithstanding, is our almost universal custom in regard to every art that we have not dubbed 'fine,' and so the working man becomes an alien and outcast from society.

But we may hear that the upraising of the workman is a revolutionary project, and that its tendency would be to shatter the foundations of society. The truth, however, is entirely otherwise, and we appeal to feelings perfectly conservative when we declare that the great want of England is a widespread class of true imaginative workmen ; men who, free from jealousy of other ranks, because they feel the dignity and comfort of their own, would never favour violent or revolutionary change, and yet would be most prompt to see and indicate whatever change is needed. These true *gentlemen* would soon become the efficient balance-weight of all society ; and from their business contact with all classes, and their sympathy with each, would bring them into harmony throughout the social scale. 'They would maintain the state of the 'world ;' and, their works and ways being entirely public, they would give no opportunity for suspicion or occasion for distrust. None would readily resent their interference or advice ; they could speak with the vulgar as well as think with the wise, and without effort would obtain the confidence of the

proprietary as well as of the operative classes in a way that what is called the middle class could never hope to emulate.

Having commenced by quoting our Historian's opinion of the method and results of modern architectural practice, let us now collect, and hear, what Goethe has to say about artistic Dilettanteism. 'The Dilettants,' who still maintain their social and professional influence in architectural affairs, he has described as 'those who, without any particular talent for art, only give way to the natural imitative tendency in them, and among other things to the imitation of Gothic Architecture. Their passion for imitation has no connection with inborn genius for art. They do little good to artists or to art; but, on the contrary, much harm, by bringing artists down to their level. *The Dilettante is honoured, and the artist is neglected.* In Dilettanteism the loss is always greater than the gain. It takes from art its essence, and spoils the public by depriving it of its artistic earnestness and sense of right. It follows the lead of the time; whereas true art gives laws and commands the time. Dilettanteism presupposes art as botchwork does handicraft; and the Dilettante holds the same relation to the artist that the botcher does to the craftsman. From handicraft the way is open to rise in art but not from botchwork. The best of all preparation is to have even the lowest scholar take part in the work of the master. The Dilettante has never more than a half-interest in art, but the artist, who is the true connoisseur, has an unconditional and entire interest in art and devotion to it. The true artist rests firmly and securely on himself, and so incurs the less danger in departing from rules; and may even, by that means, enlarge the province of art itself. Dilettanti, or rather botchers, seem not to strive like the true artist towards the highest possible aim of art, nor to see what is beyond, but only what is beside them; on this account they are always comparing. All Dilettanti are plagiarists. They enervate and pull to

‘ pieces all that is original in manner or matter ; and at the same time imitate, copy, and piece out their own emptiness with it.

‘ The publicity and permanence of architectural works renders the injurious effect of Dilettanteism in this department more universal and enduring, and perpetuates false taste ; because in art the things that are conspicuous and widely known are generally made to serve again for models. ‘ The earnest aim of a true architectural work gives it a harmony with the most important and exalted moments of man ; and botchwork in this case *does him an injury in the very point where he might be most capable of perfection.*’

Thus Art is not to be attained by Dilettante schemes or fanciful designs ; or by a vain expenditure of wealth ; or even by some recondite researches in the path of knowledge. Art is the noble end of steady and laborious work ; the glory and reward of honest, thoughtful, self-devoted handicraft. Art, ‘ when a reality, indicates something impressive and sublime ; ‘ it stamps a man with the divine seal ; setting him before us ‘ as invariably impelled to do a divine thing. Work is not to ‘ him a profession, but a vocation ; it is not something which ‘ he chooses for himself, but for which he is chosen ; which he ‘ does not advance to because he will, but because he must ; ‘ the man is not at liberty to decline the call.’ Such was the Master-Workman of the past, whose free imaginative power has ever been the life of Art ; and, in like manner, the emancipated Workman, ‘ called ’ to Art and gloriously ‘ impelled,’ must always be, and is, the only real hope of English Architecture.

# THE PROFESSION

OF

## AN 'ARCHITECT.'

BY

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*I* *ALWAYS* *felt that the most advantageous condition that a man can be placed in is the original standing of a workman, with such means of intelligent cultivation as may open to him the life of art ; to be one of the hard-handed order, privileged to know the realities of practical life ; while also a man of culture and a poet.*—HARRIET MARTINEAU.

*Diderot often told us that he never found the hours pass slowly in the company of a peasant or a cobbler, or any handicraftsman ; but that he had many a time found them pass slowly enough in the society of a courtier. ‘For of the one,’ he said, ‘one can always ask about useful and necessary things, but the other is mostly, so far as anything useful is concerned, empty and void.’*

# THE PROFESSION OF AN 'ARCHITECT.'

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IN the first Preface to his History of Modern Architecture, Mr. Fergusson asserts his own 'conviction that the architects of the present day have shown themselves thoroughly competent to the task they have undertaken;' an announcement which appears to be particularly re-assuring. Yet, proceeding, the historian declares that 'modern architects are not allowed to use their intellects, but are forced to trust to their memories; they are working on a wrong system, and from false premises, so that success seems to be impossible.' The architects of the present day are thus oracularly said to be entirely competent to an impossible success; and, Mr. Fergusson encouragingly adds, 'they would be equally competent to any task that can be proposed to them; and if they were allowed to use their intellects they might do something of which we should have cause to be proud.' Accepting this authoritative dictum about modern architects as our continuous theme, we venture now to illustrate, and to explain in practical detail, the system and condition of professional affairs which Mr. Fergusson has so ingenuously, but with prudent brevity described.

This strange and paradoxical Profession of an 'Architect' is but a modern growth; the ancient builders and the medieval masters had no knowledge of it. They were simple workmen,

paid in wages ; and more recently the king's surveyors, down to the present century, were salaried. Wren, for St. Paul's, received two hundred pounds a year, but the Profession claims a five per cent. commission on the value of the building works ; and this peculiar claim and its receipt, apart from any estimate or grade of architectural ability or of artistic merit, is the modern test of architectural fellowship.

Success in the Profession is most commonly obtained by speculating in the lottery of 'competitions,' for which drawings are prepared, perhaps by architects themselves, more frequently perhaps by architects' assistants, and too often with no interference of discoverable value from the reputed architect. Perspective views are made, to be tricked out with colours by some water-colour artist, who adds clouds and sky and trees and water, with appropriate ducks and swans ; all which has been set forth with perfect accuracy on page 304 of Mr. Fergusson's too faithful History. The drawings are then solemnly produced 'from his portfolio' by each 'architect of eminence ;' and wondering committeemen are thus beguiled by arts entirely meretricious, while connoisseurs are caught by some delusive show of classical or medieval archæology.

Such is the common method, varying of course with circumstances. Those architects who have been most successful and employ many clerks, get most of their 'designing' done at home ; others depend upon extraneous help, of which there is, it seems, a very plentiful supply. Thus, in 'The Builder :'

'A First-class Architectural Draughtsman and Designer offers his Services. Artistic, Perspective, Competition, Working, and Detail Drawings.'

'A. B. prepares Designs from Rough Sketches and renders every kind of assistance to the Profession, in town or country, on moderate and mutual terms.'

The 'mutual terms' implies a share in the professional percentage, a partnership in the 'artistic' speculation ; the re-

puted architect being a mere man of business, or perhaps of 'taste,' and the 'assistant,' as above, the 'first-class architectural designer' of the competition drawings.

'Perspective and other drawings coloured and etched with expedition on very moderate terms.'

This etching is a style of drawing much in vogue among the younger men. It supersedes the colourist, and so is 'very moderate' in cost of clerkmanship. It has a character like that of the M.B. dress, the chief distinction of so many of the clergy. There is a grim, ascetic look in the two products that attracts notice, and is thus useful in preventing further scrutiny.

The speculator whose designs have been successful then hires special clerkmanship to make the contract drawings; and the clerks perform their work in dull seclusion and routine. The builder cuts his contract down, and hopes by 'extra works' to realize a comfortable surplus. Of the architect, and even of the builder probably, the public have some knowledge; but the head workmen, who should really be the architects, are wholly out of observation; they are barbarously included with the bricks and mortar as one item in the builder's contract.

As the 'artistic' work thus hopefully proceeds, the architect, especially if 'eminent,' cannot afford to give it much of his direct and personal attention, for his time is precious to him, and he has to oversee the fabrication of more competition drawings, and to attend to office business. Thus a tale is current that a nobleman, whose house had been remodelled by a fashionable architect, discovered that the stairs had been omitted. The professional designer naïvely declared that they had 'quite escaped him.' Possibly the Earl was mystified by the absurdity of the neglect and by the frank avowal; but such failings are, in smaller matters of artistic and utilitarian detail, by no means strange in modern 'architecture'; and this one delinquency was only notable because, like the

excess of staircase in the new Government Offices at White-hall, it was so very obvious even to the uninstructed.

The decoration, furniture, and fittings are, as a rule, beyond the architect's capacity. The sub-contractor's clerks prepare designs for stained-glass windows and mosaic-work, and wall and ceiling decorations, brass and iron work, and all the fancy furniture that make a modern building look so smart. The public are enchanted with the glitter and the show of costliness, but never think that all this finery is worth no more, artistically, than a kitchen fender or the cast-iron railing on an area wall. Yet architects receive their five per cent. commission on these goods, the price of which includes the clerkmanship which they themselves profess as artists to supply. The architect in fact is not an artist, an imaginative workman, an accomplished artisan, but a commission merchant, a compiling draughtsman ; in the sphere of building art no architect at all. He is a professor, not a poet, and is called a gentleman because he cannot work ; he supervises. Therefore, to be typographically accurate, the expressions 'architect' and 'architecture' in the modern sense should be restricted by turned commas ; but, to avoid offence in a discussion which though arduous is considerate and friendly, these will be omitted in the text, and must be kindly understood.

Considering these incidents of the profession, modern architecture is regarded by most men of sense with merited aversion. Other men, especially the clergy, seem to have assumed that 'ornament,' which they call 'art,' has been contrived by Providence for their peculiar delight and entertainment ; and they therefore willingly accept the architectural profession and what Mr. Fergusson has called its 'Imitative Styles.' But art was never meant to be a merely fashionable toy for people of artistic incapacity ; it is provided most expressly as a solace for the working men who patiently produce it. That which the modern 'patrons of

the arts' obtain is but a meretricious substitute. Their real aim, indeed, is not artistic excellence, but the socially superior, the factitious culture and refinement of habitual luxury, and an impressive demonstration of the sacred money power.

In his instructive work on Spanish architecture, Mr. Street relates how, in the fifteenth century, a committee of free-masons, workmen, *lapicidæ*, were consulted by the Chapter of Gerona on a very serious project of constructive masonry; 'but,' he continues in a strain entirely professional, 'it is quite certain that had there been a superior class of men—architects only in the modern sense of the word—the Dean and Chapter would have applied first of all to them.'

Doubtless Mr. Street has ample means for forming a sound judgment about Deans and Chapters; and, confining our remark to modern architectural affairs, our abbeys and cathedrals furnish grievous evidence of their weak trust in that 'superior class of men,' whom Mr. Street calls 'architects only.' But his 'architect only' is, in fact, no genuine architect; he neither works nor rules the workmen. He is neither mason, *lapicide*, nor carver; nor has he power of utterance in any kind of building art. His recognized distinction is his comprehensive incapacity; he is *only* 'in the modern sense' an architect, a draughtsman of the 'Imitative Styles.' Now it is obvious that a class of men so much superior to handicraft would be preferred by our superior modern clergy, who are gentlemen and, sometimes, scholars. But in the Middle Ages, when art flourished, clerics were at home with working men, and had capacity to understand and thoroughly appreciate their workman's inspiration. Thus, the Chapter of Gerona, very sensibly, referred to masons for advice on masons' work. A class of men who solemnly produced designs from their portfolios would have been listened to with a half comic curiosity, and then dismissed with a grim smile, as drawing masters only.

The substitution of mere social uprightness for the accomplished workman's culture and artistic skill is nearly universal. In a letter to 'The Builder' on 'The Hope of English Architecture,' Mr. Fergusson, admitting truthfully that 'architecture has in Europe since the Reformation been practised on different principles from those which governed its use before that time, and in all ancient and some modern countries till the present day,' asserts with seeming satisfaction that 'since the Reformation the architect, as we now understand the term, has played a much more important part than he did before.' But, on the other hand, M. Viollet-le-Duc declares that 'at the end of the fourteenth century the architect had *lost* the elevated position he held during the previous two hundred years.' M. Viollet-le-Duc, however, quite agrees with our historian, that 'although the hands of the artists had not lost their cunning, the intellect which had formerly directed them was gone.'

The 'difference' that Mr. Fergusson has found in architectural practice previous to the Reformation lay in the important fact that there was then *no* 'architect, as we now understand the term.' The medieval master and the modern architect are wholly different, as are their works; and this distinction should in architectural discussions be kept constantly in mind. The one was an artistic and creative working man; the other is a draughtsman who designs and does *not* work. The one was constantly engaged upon *one* work as a superior artisan; the other is a man of business and a pluralist. It is quite true that, in the modern sense, the draughtsman - pluralist is more important than the old artistic workman; but in the interest of art it would have been far better if the architect had kept in the position of the master mason, had continued his artistic, unpretending method, and had never played a part, however socially important it might seem. The sad result of this importance is becoming understood, and even at the 'Institute of British

Architects' it has been openly declared, without a whisper of denial, that 'a great many of the buildings of the present day were built only to be admired for a short period'—that is, until their worthlessness is generally evident. 'We hear of people going to visit old buildings, but we never see them visit modern ones. The only test was, Did modern buildings give satisfaction? Certainly not; and means should be taken to make it difficult for the public to employ a man who set up for a practical architect, and who was not fully alive to his profession' (Sir Edmund Beckett).

Now, this ignorant employment of unpractised architects is just the reason why our modern buildings are 'unsatisfactory, and no one goes to see them.' The epoch of the Reformation, quoted by Mr. Fergusson, roughly separates the former times of public knowledge from the present period of public ignorance of building art; and the true meaning of his thesis is, that in the time of public ignorance a counterfeit of art, in 'Imitative Styles,' is said to flourish, and becomes important. Mr. Fergusson is precisely accurate in this historic fact; and its announcement is a valuable warning to the modern world.

In classic and in medieval times, and even now where architectural beauty most abounds, the builders always have been workmen, paid in wages or by salary, living at their work, and taking constant interest in it; knowing little else perhaps, but knowing their own workman's practice well. They used a popular artistic language, and expressed their thoughts and feelings with the habitual amplitude and ease of perfect culture. Such artistic skill was universal. Workmen of all trades were from their childhood educated *by* their work; their thoughts were always passing into handicraft, and so expression came unconsciously. The upper classes naturally learnt the language of the populace, the universal rule. Expression, verbal or artistic, has its origin in individual requirement, and custom formulates it; general use begets

facility of utterance, and then felicity of thought ; and thus, alike in literature and art, creative poetry proceeds.

Then, ‘ In the middle ages the building art being in only one style, and being based on such simple common-sense principles that it could be understood by all, was one great cause of the perfection it attained.’ As Mr. Fergusson proceeds, however, his corollary is erroneous in fact and inconsequent in deduction. ‘ The practice of art’ did *not* ‘ practically fall into the hands of the most refined and intellectual of the upper classes.’ These classes were engaged during the last periods of medieval art in very different work. They understood the art, and often they could practise it ; but though they all, both clerical and lay, built largely, building work was practically in the hands of the chiefs of the masons. Even the keeper of the works, or *operarius*, was but a supervisor, to control and check the mason in all matters of arrangement and expense, but not in any way to interfere with or direct the details of the work.

Mr. Fergusson continues hypothetically : ‘ If we could again revert to one style suited to our wants, and up to the highest standard of our tastes, we could again enlist the sympathy and co-operation of the highest classes in the art. Or if the most intellectual and most refined of the upper classes could be induced earnestly to interest themselves in the art, they would soon sweep away the trammels that now encumber its practice. It is only by the best and most refined intellects that the reform can be effected.’

‘ Taste’ is a sensual word, irrevelant to art, and only fit for luxury, its modern substitute. The word is used by those who are esteemed superior people, and by ‘ good society,’ who think it means a species of refinement. On the contrary, it is a coarse, indefinite expression, indicating sympathy with lust of eye and pride of life. If Mr. Fergusson had said we want a style down to the common level of our sensuality, there would have been much truth in the remark.

'Our tastes' are sensual, not artistic, and among the upper classes 'taste' is studiously developed ; Mr. Fergusson's proposal, therefore, cannot lead to good. Had he suggested general sympathy with workmen, quite apart from 'taste,' there might have been some hope. Of course the highest classes and their sympathy should generously be recognised, and welcomed with encouragement and kindness ; but in art, which is to say in work, the energetic sympathy of those who *do* it is the first necessity. Besides, these intellects, the best and most refined, must be discovered ; and, unfortunately, Mr. Fergusson has failed to tell us how, and by what unquestioned, absolute authority, this great discovery can be made. Poetic power in artistic or in verbal language never was the special gift of social aristocracy. The wise are seldom wealthy ; Socrates was but a needy lapicide, and the great poets of the world have mostly been of humble origin. Rank is the distinction of the few, but excellence is the result of multitude ; and to obtain abundant excellence the area of production should be wide, the artistic power of men of every rank should be developed, the most ample opportunity should be secured for natural selection, and the broadest base for eminent superiority. Thus in all ages art has been the heritage and honour of the working men before all ranks and classes of society ; and when these men again are free to work with artisan intelligence *their* best and most refined intellects will rise to observation, and be recognised by all men.

Art is essentially democratic. The Athenian *demos*, the Italian decorators of the thirteenth century, and the medieval masons were its special friends and representatives. Its chief enemies have been, and are, the socially distinguished, those whom Mr. Fergusson alludes to as 'the best and most refined.' These never of themselves produced a genuine architectural art. All they could do when they neglected the great source of art was to invent and patronize the 'Imitative

Styles.' At the Revival, the superior classes thought, when they developed luxury in building, and indulged in pseudo-classic pedantry, that they were patronizing art. The error was egregious; they were only self-deluded architectural barbarians, anxious for a reputation for 'good taste,' jealous of social rivalry, and spending more of other people's money than their own on the displays of splendour and magnificence which fashionable people, then and since, have called 'fine art.' True building art was neglected, overlaid, and utterly stamped out by these most intellectual and most refined.

For three hundred years the upper classes have thus prostituted art to showiness and pomp, to false refinement and extravagance of luxury. Hence their fine Mansions, Castles, Halls, and Palaces are principally sumptuous and dreary; pride and its penalty combined. These are their personal, peculiar displays of art; their general patronage is shown in their own labourers' cottages, and in the leasehold houses on their urban property. The Portland, Bedford, Portman, Grosvenor, and the ecclesiastical estates in London, are extensive areas of systematic calculating greed and ignorant contempt of art. Yet their proprietors, by purchasing a picture or commanding a new statue as a mere profusion, would of course be designated and described as 'men of taste,' refined and intellectual, and patrons of the arts. The common people and the speculating builders have, on leasehold tenure, followed all the fashions of their intellectual superiors; and thus, owing to the blighting interest of the highest classes, London has become an architectural, artistic desolation.

About forty years ago there was in England the commencement of a second quasi-architectural revival. Those who were foremost in the architectural profession were well watched by men of culture of a certain sort; not, as they thought, artistic, but scholastic, technical, and antiquarian. The draughtsmen most in fashion, and their patrons, were not artists but grammarians; and the early Pall Mall Clubs, St.

Giles's Church at Camberwell, the National Gallery façade, and the Houses of Parliament, were but reminiscences of foreign travel or of English archaeology ; attempts to imitate, and thus, as was supposed, to utilize, the work of former ages. This looked scholarly, and the connoisseurs approved ; the public too were interested in the novel style and in the striking cleanliness of the new buildings, which they 'for a little time' admired.

Such clever adaptations having thus gained public favour, architects of eminence soon found that notoriety would, in more ways than one, bring money in. Parents, and promising young persons who were thought to have 'a taste for drawing,' sought the artistic sponsorship of these distinguished men ; and premiums for pupils, who were seldom taught, became the welcome tribute to success. Thus the profession multiplied, and books of illustrations and examples multiplied in due proportion ; all the world indeed was ransacked for new styles and sketches and details. The public, wholly ignorant of art, but constantly appealed to for its patronage and interest, assumed that its decision must be valuable, and that by competition 'taste' would be developed and the arts encouraged. Art was of course degraded, and its nominal professors lived by pandering, as Mr. Fergusson so greatly fears the working men might do, to ignorance and vulgarity.

Still, we admit that the profession is not the chief culprit, nor are our present architects especially to blame. They were all born and bred to the bad system, which they are now almost compelled by public exigence to carry on. The public is indeed the great, unconscious enemy of art. Perhaps one man in twenty thousand has sufficient cultured sensibility and knowledge for a passable opinion on an architectural work, but of the rest the greater part have even failed to learn that they are ignorant. The candid reader will consider for a moment, and he then will acquiesce. No person of respectability is too incapable to be promoted to an architectural committee, and none see the folly of deferring to a group of architectural

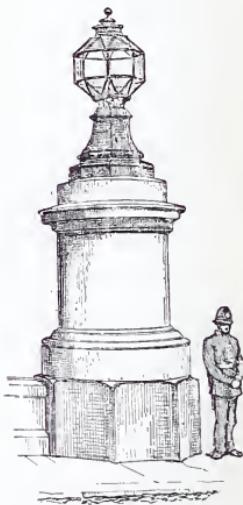
ignoramuses ; except, indeed, the architects themselves, who, business-like, soon learn that if they would commercially succeed, they must not fail to please their uninstructed patrons. Yet an independent man of art-discernment, with a sense of the ridiculous, would lightly weigh the approbation of a ‘miscellaneous multitude.’ An architect, apparently a modest man, is said to have admitted that in business his chief care was how to frame acknowledgments at once polite and truthful of such laudatory but erroneous criticisms as good-natured, undiscerning people frequently thought fit to offer.

To take a very simple illustration of contemporary connoisseurship and inventive power : certain lamps, the thin, transparent shelter



WORKMAN'S ART.

for a totally imponderable body, were required at Trafalgar Square, and medieval workmen would have furnished metal holders, light and graceful, fitting for so light an object. This would be too rational for modern ‘art ;’ and so we have two structures built of stone, thick as the piers of an old Norman abbey,

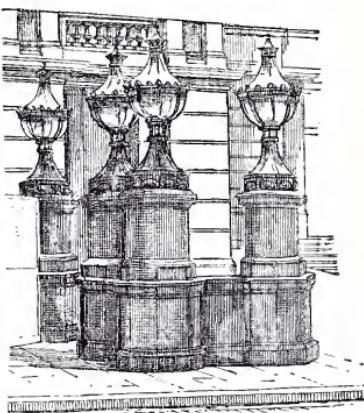


AN 'ARCHITECTS' LAMPPOST.

with a proper architectural base and moulded cornice, and two lamps superfluously solid for the Eddystone ; each a burlesque construction to support a jet of gas.

These monuments have stood for years by the highway, and in the centre of our ‘art’ metropolis, but no one has remarked on their absurdity ; they seem, indeed, to be admired, for in Cannon Street, in front of the South-Eastern railway station, have been placed a dozen similar constructions, made of polished granite, to express so bright a fancy.

Such absurd contrivances are the public occupation and the reason for existence of the architectural profession ; the majority of modern buildings have been decorated 'tastefully' with such displays. The public see the things but cannot understand them, take them for magnificent, and so pass by ; and thus by constant habit of neglect they have entirely lost the faculty of reasonable observation ; sound discriminating criticism being scarcely known. This want of systematic public architectural discussion is in many ways injurious. Those who are capable of trenchant and judicious criticism are restrained by senseless custom, and by fear of what is called society ; and so, instead of uttering serious, discerning judgments, they supply weak platitudes, habitually laudatory. Where an occasional objection is declared, the dispraise is empirical, unsystematic, hesitating and incapable of good. The public are thus hoodwinked and deluded ; things are made smooth for all, and names of eminence are treated with a show of deference, as if they were of value.



ITS DESCENDANTS.

Thus the bewildered public, recognizing only fashionable names, yield prominence and notoriety to very mediocre and inferior men ; and, as they grievously complain, are badly served. Moreover, architects themselves are sufferers by the euphemistic system ; they lose manliness of mind, and sometimes sink into a state of hypersensibility that seems unnatural, and is undoubtedly ridiculous. A short time since some observations not quite laudatory on the style of manufacture of an architect of eminence, and on the occasionally defective accuracy of his statements and discernment, were so shocking and unprecedented that he became spontaneously inarticulate, and could only point to what, 'on better thoughts,'

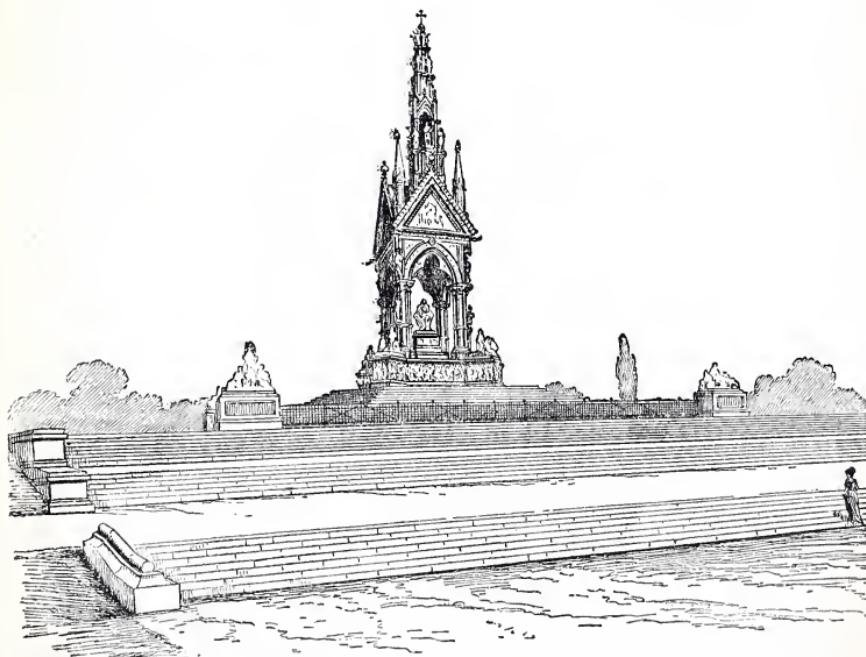
he would not *say*. This is sheer nonsense ; architects of eminence are not so sensitive about the substance or the cooking of their pabulum of praise ; and if a dash of bitter mingles with the sweet a healthy appetite should find delight in the astringent. We would deprecate all needless reference to merely social individualities, but architects who have, or are supposed to have, directly individual claims, and a position strictly individual before the public, are as open as our politicians to the criticisms of the world. They seek the breath of praise ; and if they spread their sails to catch the wind, they should remember that 'it bloweth where it listeth,' and beware.

Such needful, vigorous criticism being almost wanting, we have lost the help of what might loyally be called Her Majesty's artistic Opposition. Under the present semi-silent system only one great party in the House is heard, and that of course is thoroughly 'protectionist.' We leave our readers to imagine the result in national affairs if we were ruled and guided by an oligarchy founded on public ignorance, incapable of good, and systematically free from all political, because it would be personal, attack ; the principle alone of oligarchy being open for discussion. No such incongruity is possible in art ; 'I know only one way of flattering an artist, and this consists in presupposing that he is above all petty sensibility, that art is everything in his eyes, that he wishes to be criticised, even preferring to be judged amiss than not judged at all' (G. E. Lessing).

But criticism is not merely wanting, it is constantly travestied and its name is made a snare. With few exceptions, architectural notices in the newspapers are excessively misleading. They are written by men evidently ignorant of art, who trade in eulogy ; and they are frequently 'inspired.' The monument to the late Prince Consort, in Hyde Park, has had as much explanatory notice as would fill a 'Times' newspaper, and the unenlightened public has been left to wonder why a work so perseveringly and highly praised should seem so unimpre-

sive and ungainly. The erection is, however, so well known by sight and by statistical details of lengths and breadths and cubical contents and weight of the material, and the 'ideas of the architect' have been so carefully expounded, that it invites artistic, critical discussion. Moreover, it was by an architect of eminence; to select the works of what are called inferior men might seem unfair to the profession, and we therefore make no choice, but take the most 'superior' as a subject for a few contemplative remarks.

A visitor approaching this extensive shrine will understand that Mr. Fergusson's requirements are here fully met; the work *has* 'practically fallen into the hands of the most refined and most intellectual of the upper classes.' Social position, professional eminence, commercial and administrative capacity, mechanical skill, the quality and costliness of every material, have all been excellent, in fact supreme, and the result is perfectly consistent, a most superior affair. The



AN 'ARCHITECTURAL' MONUMENT.

monument, above the ground, commences with a large inflation of brick piers and arches, which support long flights of steps and landings, with abutting piers ; and when an architectural student totally without ideas starts in design, such piles of steps and piers are his immediate resource. The monument is thus founded, in a way quite *unmonumental*, on a vast conglomerate of coal cellars and street kerbs.

As 'steps' are the first refuge for the architectural destitute, so the 'Four Quarters of the Globe' assist the monumental sculptor. They admit of any nonsense ; no one can tell assuredly what all the figures mean, or why they came together. Thus they are used unmeaningly, to make a show and catch the eye, with no attempt to satisfy the understanding. Next is the podium, covered with figures just as irrelevant as the 'Four



IDEAL 'ARCHITECTS.'

Quarters of the Globe.' In one corner is a group of fancy portraits, named after celebrated ancient master workmen ; somewhat interesting, as they represent the carvers, and thus probably the best and most refined idea of the style and

manner of the classic architect. These figures are not shown in workmen's dress, nor in heroic fashion without clothes, nor

are they actively engaged in handicraft, nor yet 'assigning to the individual workmen their appropriate tasks ;' they are a set of weak-limbed, semi-idiotic and half-naked loungers, wrapped in sheets, engaged and much perplexed in watching one who, specially insane, is busy in a bungling way with compasses and paper and will surely make a painful puncture in his knee. These ideal architects have nothing of the workman in their figure, muscle, implements, or swaddling clothes. The carver evidently thought, with most of his contemporaries, that Greek master workmen were in some way superhuman, beings of pure thought, not working men at all, but absolute creators, who evoked the Parthenon complete from their superior intellects, just as Minerva sprang, all armoured, from the brain of Jove.

Another corner has a group of modern 'architects of eminence.' The shrewd, successful, speculating draughtsman, 'clever at a plan,' and the pedantic scholar are appropriately distinguished, while the enthusiastic architectural reformer turns his back upon the pair. On the west front, Vischer of Nuremberg, a real artist, stands, a noble contrast to the carver's queer ideal of the Greek master workmen, and also to the comical presentment of our modern men.

Above the podium, the groups of odds and ends called 'Agriculture,' 'Commerce,' 'Manufacture' and 'Engineering' serve, very needfully, to make up something of an outline



ARCHITECTS' IN THE MODERN SENSE.

for the monument. Then the large granite columns, polished by machinery, support a canopy with arches, and an elaborate deformity of spire which, by some occult contrivance in the nature of a juggler's trick, is hung up in mid air. The ornamental work is a dull manufacture ; the coarse jewellery merely serves to give a sense of costliness and of extravagant, unlimited expense, and the small bantam angels that, below the cross, are clawing upwards to the sky, supply the fashionable, sanctimonious element. The shrine, constructively, is but a four-legged table ; and the real architect or master was the man who wrought the heavy girders that tie in the columns and support the spire.



A MASTER-WORKMAN.

In the whole structure art is wanting, and instead we have a 'trophy' or advertisement composed of manufactured goods, a model for a pastrycook's pagoda. But this is no discredit to the nominal designer of the work ; small blame is due to him, if little praise. He was an 'architect as we now understand the term,' and his production is, according to the present system, in the 'Imitation Style ;' he was playing, as we know, a more important part than that of the old master workmen. Had he been a Phidias or a Vischer and had done his best, he would, among the most refined, have had but little chance of proper recognition. Those most 'tasteful' persons did not seek an artist to *design and make* the monument, but only a distinguished draughtsman to compose it in an imitative way. Were a true architect or master to produce a work of inspiration the superior world would be astonished and perplexed. The idea of any good thing coming from a common working - man, like Adam

Kafft of Nuremberg, Jacobo of Assisi, Mateo of Compostella, or William of Sens, would trouble people ; and their first inquiry would be, ' Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed ? '

This being so, the public may perhaps concur with Mr. Fergusson when he proceeds to say ' that any step towards employing persons of a lower educational or social status than the profession of architects as now constituted would be a step in the wrong direction.' To read this it would seem that artist's work does not require a workman's, but a classical and scientific education ; that a scribe of Latin verses or a registrar of stars, a courteous *dilettante* or a knowing *connoisseur*, a fortune in the funds, or a patent of nobility, would be more likely to produce the Parthenon, the Pisan duomo, or the choir at Westminster, than the ' low ' and, in the modern sense, uneducated working men who actually made these monuments of art ; that when the drawing-master who ' designed ' St. Stephen's Hall destroyed St. Stephen's Chapel, that was a step in the right direction, since the draughtsman was in educational and social status higher than the workmen who directly built the chapel. But in times of art the workmen gained their social status by their work. The men whom we have named were by their birth of low degree, and Turner, Flaxman, Stephenson, and Watt must, it appears, have risen from the wrong direction. Yet, perhaps unfortunately, Heaven, when providing creative imagination as the noblest education for mankind, has no particular respect for rank ; and the diffusion of the sacred gift of poetry in words or works is quite uninfluenced by the educational or social status of its various recipients. Imagination is the portion equally of beggars and of princes ; it is the solace of the human intellect, the help-meet for the busy, working mind of man ; and when the workmen ruled and their imagination had full play, the natural result was art. If mental culture is the duty of society, imaginative education should be made a public

care. But in our schools imagination is repudiated and repressed, and everywhere the true artistic culture of our working people is neglected. Since the revival, and the introduction of exotic styles of architecture, there has been a constantly increasing degradation of our building workmen. They, like the profession who have superseded them, are 'not allowed to use their intellects,' and the effect upon their class, on art, and on society is lamentable. Now, instead of homely sympathy with the imaginative work of artisans, we have the transient admiration of the multitude for draughtsmen's compilations; foolish efforts, which the public never care to understand, and which are not, artistically, worth their comprehension. When, in a few years' time, our working men become instructed, on a par with those who now are called 'their betters,' they will reassert their true position in society, and will again be welcomed to 'their place' as 'masters,' real architects. Then building art of every kind will flourish as of old, when workmen, being always free, habitually used their intellects and their imagination. For the present 'good society,' whose 'most refined and intellectual' works are altogether sordid, sets the fashion of the 'Imitative Styles,' and banishes intelligence from the domain of art. The new Parisian opera-house and the Prince Consort's shrine are the most prominent direct results of super-social and fictitious architectural culture.

Thus, then, the highest educational and social status having failed to give us art, we may perhaps dispense with such superiority, and, guided by historic testimony and the evidence of nature, seek to cultivate the lively genius and imaginative power of every class, so that the area for improvement may be infinitely wide and excellence abundant. The great poets of old time did not recite their verses in a recondite, a foreign or an unknown tongue; their utterance was always in the language of the people, homely or polished, the dignified or the vernacular. And so again, when all men understand and

all our artisans habitually practise national or territorial, spontaneous art, each working man will grow artistically to his full development, and those poetically great among them will become their chiefs, the real architects. Thus art will be recovered, and again will be illustrious and refined. When we have found the diamond to polish it is easy.

Throughout the history of art in every age its greatest workmen have, with very few exceptions, not been highly educated, but, according to our modern standard, ignorant, uncultivated men. The special excellence by which each working man was individually known was art in workmanship ; and thus in ancient Greece the very names of architects and artists indicate their artisan ability. The mythic centaur-artist Chiron was, in English, 'Mr. Handy ;' Cheirisophus, a carver of repute, was 'clever-handed.' Then there were Eueheir and Eupalamus, each 'good - handed ;' and our bungling friend upon the Albert monument is labelled as the artist Chersiphron, the 'handy-minded,' one of the master workmen at the Ephesian temple of Artemis. These Greek names derived from handicraft are interesting in their difference from our own, which are all simple names, like Mason, Carpenter, and Smith, Paynter and Wright, and in the second generation, like Benhadad, Mr. Smithson. There is no quality or excellence denoted ; but in Greece the quality is most considered, not the trade.

In contrast with the status and profession of the modern architect we give an illustration of the architectural practice and the simple status of the workman in the middle ages. In an interesting paper read some years ago at the 'Institute of British Architects,' Mr. Wyatt Papworth says : 'The result of my research leads me to believe that the master masons were generally the architects in the medieval period in England. In the stained glass of the college of Winchester may be seen the representations of three personages : the carpenter ; Wilhelmus Wynfor, lathomus or mason ;

and the paymaster of the cathedral works. I conceive that in William Wynfor we thus obtain the architect of the college at Winchester, as well as of the works at Winchester cathedral.' And again: 'At Salisbury the master of the works, the keeper of the works, and the master mason are all mentioned together in one document of 1367; so there is no chance of confusing them one with another. At the building of Salisbury cathedral, "Robertus, cementarius"—mason—"rexit per viginti-quinque annos." The mason was, in fact, the devisor of the works; and in a postscript Mr. Papworth adds, from 'Hunt's Tudor Architecture,' 'It appears that in those times the devisor of the works acted invariably under a supervising officer, who, leaving the artist's genius and fancy unshackled, controlled and restrained the expenditure of money.' A very perfect method of architectural procedure.

Another medieval incident is, in connection with our subject, worth quotation. When, in the fourteenth century, the choir of the Cathedral of Gerona was in progress the chief mason died, and one Jacopo de Favariis was hired, at about sixty modern English pounds a quarter, to come occasionally from Narbonne to Gerona to direct the works. This lasted for about four years; and then another mason went in charge, and worked as master for some one-and-twenty years, until the choir was finished. But Jacopo's brief and inconvenient engagement has been held to show that in those times there was 'a class of men, not workmen, who were really and only superintendents of buildings, architects in the modern sense.'\* It shows, in fact, precisely the reverse. The case was notably exceptional; and as the choir took twenty-five or thirty years to build, Jacopo's four years' work would probably not reach above the sills of the aisle windows. He had thus to see that the plain walls were sound in work and true in plan. When more than this was needed he retired, and another mason was engaged to *live upon the spot* and do the work.

\* Street's 'Gothic Architecture in Spain.'

Jacobo had, it seems, to go from Narbonne to Gerona, and return, six times a year. The distance was about a hundred miles each way, the road a mule path, and the double journey probably a fortnight's work, with risks of weather and of torrent streams; and then a fortnight more would probably be needful to inspect the work and to arrange for the supply of various materials. Is this the way of architectural practice 'in the modern sense'? Would any modern architect of eminence spend half his time about the superintendence of one work, and for his salary and charges be entirely satisfied with twenty pounds a month? Or, as Jacobo was 'an architect in the modern sense,' is there in the 'Institute' a class of master masons paid by salary or wages at some thirteen shillings daily?

It is further said to be 'of comparatively little importance whether the architect is paid as of old by the year or by a commission on the cost of the works; probably the difference in amount is seldom serious.' In olden time the master received wages as a working man; the modern architect is not a workman but a broker, and he claims his five per cent. not as a payment made according to his worth, but as a commission on his employer's outlay; and besides, there are his travelling expenses and the salary of a clerk of works, who is the real architect, itself as much as the whole payment to the medieval master. Thus the professing architect can job illimitably; he can neglect and delegate and overlook all things except his pay, and so by energetic trading he becomes perhaps a man of fortune. But the medieval masters of the works were men of art; that was *their* fortune, and their pay was moderate. At St. Stephen's chapel, Westminster, the gem of English art, the fabric rolls say nothing of an architect; but there is sufficient evidence that the master mason made his own design; and he was paid, for all, about ten shillings of our modern currency per day.

Wren's salary at St. Paul's was equal to about thirteen shillings per day; 'out of which he had to pay for the models and drawings of every part, as well as to audit the accounts, and to visit the building daily, and to afford it his constant superintendence.' This lasted for thirty-five years; and he received in all about seven thousand pounds, or less than one per cent. on the whole outlay on the building. Possibly our readers may have seen the plans and views of the proposed Museum at South Kensington. The expenditure was estimated at four hundred thousand pounds; and at the usual five per cent., exclusive of the salary of the clerk of works, the architects' commission for a few years' occasional attendance would be twenty thousand pounds; a professional percentage six times as great as that which Wren received for five and thirty years of constant daily care. Or if the terms were modified, for Government is not utterly deluded,\* several thousand pounds would be the monstrous pay. We need not now discuss the actual worth of the design, but merely say that as the building is as monotonous as a wall paper in the repetition of its architectural forms, the commission might be equitably calculated on the cost of one compartment only. But, however paid, the architect is free. He may occasionally see the work, but he can, quite professionally, delegate its daily, present care, and have his time engaged in making money in a corresponding way out of a score of other buildings.

Modern professionalism is an organized contrivance to impress the public with a notion that 'professors,' a self-constituted class, have a mysterious claim for pay immensely greater than the simple workman's wages. Recently Sir Edward Watkin has suggestively compared a common workman in his work and pay with a most eminent professor among civil engineers. "Old Edward Pease," as his friends

\* Yet it is said that recently an architect received from Government £5,000 because he did *not* build his elegant design, which was not worth commercially £500, nor yet artistically £50.

familiarly called him, told me the story of his bargain with George Stephenson for the engineering of the Stockton and Darlington railway. He said he had many interviews with "George," and had said, "'Now, George, do thee think it well over, and let me know what thee can oversee and complete this work for Parliament for. We do not want thee to lose by it, remember; but thou must not forget that if thou succeed it will be the making of thee, George, and thou must be moderate.' Thus one night George came to my house, and I sent him out some bread and cheese and beer into the kitchen; and then we had our conversation. George said he thought he could do it for about £80 and day-wages, and I accepted his proposal; and thee cannot fail to observe, Edward Watkin, that no such work has been done since" (the line and branches were, I think, twenty-five miles long) "for a hundred times the money." This chance conversation came often into my mind when I had, as a trustee for a suffering—I will not say deluded—body of shareholders, to deal in 1872 with the "professional" (save the mark!) bills of a modern engineer, and found that the engineering, surveying, and parliamentary charges for about five-and-twenty miles of metropolitan railways, including construction, were something approaching half a million sterling.' A heavy tribute to superior social status, as the reader cannot fail to observe.

We request our readers constantly to bear in mind that our objection is directed specially to a delusive architectural system, and it only incidentally refers to those who may, in error, often unperceived, adopt this evil system as a business-like career. The votaries of the profession are fit objects for compassionate regard, and not for hostile or for inconsiderate criticism. They are gentlemen in all respects as good as other men, and so are worthy of due honour. They are sufferers rather than offenders, and may therefore claim our sympathy. Although their works are but a substitute for art, their good professional intention may be fairly recognized.

Their chief desire is, as appears, to do much business, and to get abundantly both money and applause; which motives are extremely honoured by the world. And if they err in judgment as regards their 'business,' they should be excused; for architects must, mentally, become perverted and obscured by constant interest in a seeming truth essentially untrue. Though they may feel that their profession is a sham, they cannot realize the fact because they do not think; their business, Mr. Fergusson has told them, does not cultivate intelligence. Yet, though they may be stolid, they must have at least instinctive disrespect for what they deal in; and this certainly conduces to diminished self-respect. Thus then, in contrast with true work of art, this vain profession of an architect becomes an injury to those who follow it; it desecrates and wastes their lives, and consequently architects who have discernment suffer a corroding consciousness of failure. Such sad consciousness was recently acknowledged, with much laudable emotion, in a public, frank confession of dissatisfaction and despair.

The reader's most respectful sympathy for these unhappy gentlemen is therefore perfectly assured; and we may freely instance some effects of their pernicious system on their own professional discourse. In the Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects there has been published an instructive paper about medieval and Renaissance architectural drawing, with a discussion thereupon, which shows us something of the intellectual status and condition of the architectural profession. Possibly a note or two of the debate may be found interesting; it may assist us to test Mr. Fergusson's assertion that our 'modern architects are not allowed to use their intellects.' We must, of course, condense, and, with a delicate regard for modest sensibility, omit the names.

A, the author of the paper, which was well worth publishing, declared his preference for 'a thick line' in architectural drawing. B could not adhere to the thick line, but had much

to say on pens and brushes, points and pencils, styles and touches, outlines and shadows. C, Fellow, thought that 'the object of an architect's drawing was to explain his thoughts.' D 'wished for a specimen of A's thick line.' At this practical suggestion the debate appeared to brighten. E, Fellow, 'thought that the discussion was likely to bring architects and their work into disrepute when they were found quarrelling about the thickness of lines. Modern architectural exhibitions would almost lead to the supposition that the drawings were to take the place of the buildings themselves;' a vain and hopeless supposition. F, Fellow, 'agreed that the style of drawing was part of the intellect of the designer; he agreed with A, that a forcible, nervous style was to be encouraged.' G, Fellow, observed 'that black lines prevailed considerably in France.' H said 'that, in naming sixty-four lines to an inch as moderately thick, he was stating a fact, and not a sentiment.' K said 'that the intention of a drawing was to represent what would be *its* appearance when executed.' And D, again, 'thought a drawing was a conventional mode of representing a building on paper.'

Now here is evident unconsciousness. The system speaks; the men have merely lost themselves, and are not properly accountable. These gentlemen were doubtless highly gifted both by nature and by education; they were eminent in business, and, of course, commercially, intelligent and energetic men; but when they talk of what they call their art and their profession the discourse most naturally sinks into absurdity. Even Sir Christopher would have appeared grotesque if he had made his 'style of drawing part of his intellect; ' and 'sixty-four lines to an inch' seems hardly likely to develope into the western elevation of St. Paul's.

When speaking at another meeting and discussion at the 'Institute,'\* F, Fellow, who appears to run excessively to words, said that 'The human mind never worked without

\* 'On the Dark Ages of Architecture.'

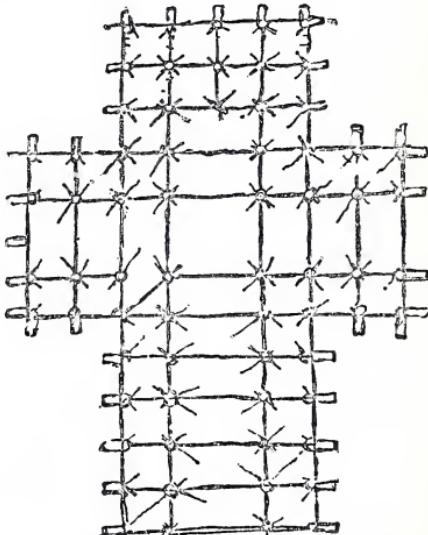
materials. . . . The human mind, turning to the remains of classic Rome, found a system, &c. . . . It found in the remains of Roman architecture, sculpture, poetry, philosophy, and history, examples upon which it could, with great credit to itself, rely under the circumstances in which it was placed. . . . Nothing could have been more applicable to the cravings of the human mind when the Gothic had died away and left mankind in the lurch. How could the human mind have better formed a new style than by referring to these structures? History had its tale to tell, and it was predestinated. Instead of sneering at those who have gone before, let us endeavour to trace where the human mind was true to itself, and let us see where we in our turn can be true to ourselves.'

Here, then, we have a new philosophy, that 'of the Institute.' The reference to sneering was addressed to K, Fellow, who, forgetting where he was, had said that 'architects hedged themselves about with a set of rules, the observance of which could only be appreciated by the initiated, in oblivion that Art should pierce directly to the simple and the true.' The chairman, B, V. P., thereupon administered a sharp rebuke to K, who was told that he 'wanted a reverent spirit. It was not originality, or desire to excel that he,' K, 'required, but breadth and strength, flexibility, and the power of eliminating' (*sic*) 'beauty, wherever it might exist, without prejudice or bias; and it was alone by turning their attention to developing these catholic elements that he or any other artist of the present day might hope to become great masters.' At an annual dinner of the 'Institute,' F, Fellow, further mentioned that 'In his opinion, before many years were over, we should see Greek architecture revived in this country. This he said not in disparagement of any other order of architecture, but everything must have its turn, and when it came to their turn to revive Greek architecture they would do it with the same credit to themselves as they had revived the Gothic.' We have con-

sequently something to look forward to, with Mr. Fergusson's encouraging assurance still in mind.

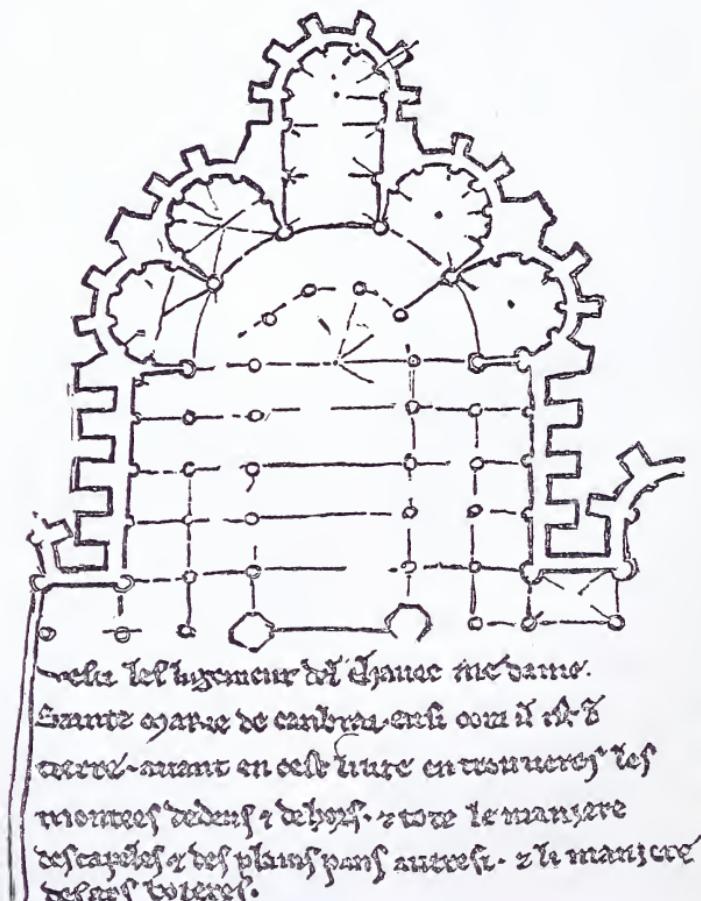
At the same gathering the President 'observed that architects claimed to be artists because they had to deal with beauty in composition ;' which entirely begs the question. But this 'dealing with beauty' has a strikingly commercial, inartistic sound ; indeed a quondam 'President' immediately said, 'they had to look on architecture as a business.' Furthermore, with friendly candour, Mr. Fergusson declares that architecture is now 'handed over too exclusively to professional men, who live by it, and generally succeed more from their business habits than from their artistic powers.' The elevating influence of art is, therefore, wanting in the architectural profession, which is too exclusively a thing of common and *unelevating* trade ; and in the sphere of art is, we are told, a senseless sham.

And now, by way of modest, merely curious comparison, let us refer to some recorded 'Architectural Transactions' of six hundred years ago ; and hear what an old workman of the thirteenth century, an architect of eminence, though of the workman class, addressed to his compeers. Wilars de Honecourt was a mason of Cambray ; the architect, as it appears, of the cathedral there. His sketch-book has been found and published, and his sketches are quite different from those of modern architects. The lines, made probably with the black stone that masons use to mark their work, would shock our



*Yestor une glace de square kufa  
esgardoee a faire en tozdenes estatu*  
'This is a square church which was  
designed for the Cistercian Order.'

'Institute; ' 'sixty-four lines to an inch' was quite beyond De Honecourt's reach of 'sentiment.' Scale and proportion were apparently unthought of; these old sketches were rough memoranda, such as any person who could hold a pen might do, and indicated nothing of the actual appearance of the architectural work referred to. Wilars' thick lines were not 'to represent a building' but to help to build it. In his notes or legends we hear nothing of the 'human mind,' or of its

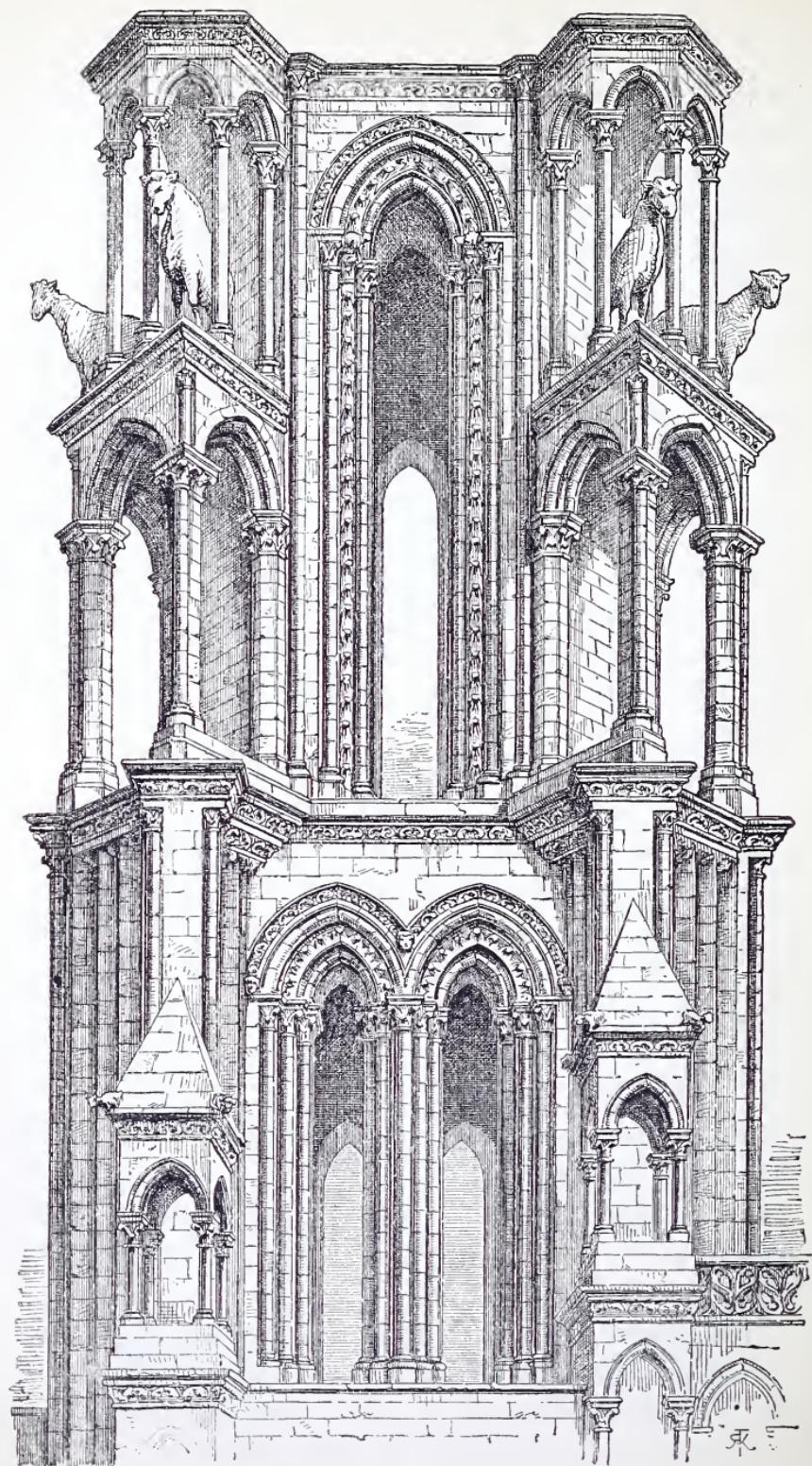


'This is a plan of the apse of "Madame Saint Mary," of Cambray, as it is now rising from the ground. Further on in this book you will find the inside and outside elevations, the arrangements of the chapels and lateral walls and of the flying buttresses.'

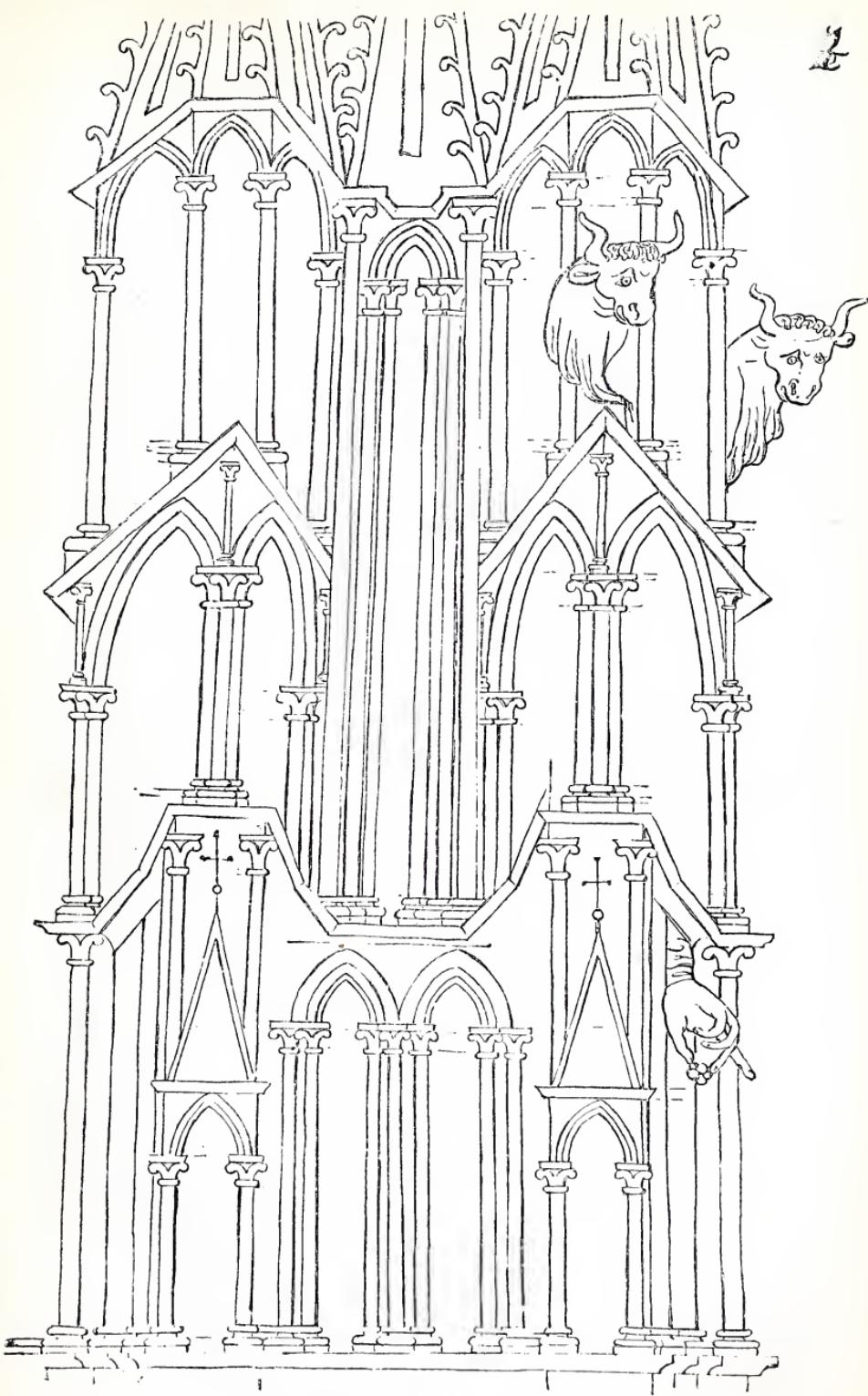
having 'found a system ; nothing of 'want of reverence,' nor —we blush to write it—of 'eliminating beauty without prejudice or bias,' and no fine talk about 'becoming great masters.' There is no hint of a 'desire to excel, or to be esteemed 'original.' Wilars was thinking simply of his work, humbly of his own need for pitiful compassion, and very confidently of his claim on the goodwill and kind remembrance of his various fellow workmen. 'Wilars de Honecort salutes you, and implores all who labour at the different kinds of work contained in this book to pray for his soul and to hold him in remembrance'—Labour and prayer and social sympathy, all from a 'common, unrefined, inferior' artisan, —'for in this book may be found good help to the knowledge of the great power of masonry and of devices in carpentry ;' things much beneath our 'artists' of the present day, who find their 'force' in lines, their 'intellect' in style of draughtsmanship.

Throughout, the book is perfectly unselfish in its tone ; 'the principle of competition' is entirely wanting ; nor is there any exhortation to the craftsmen to 'be true to themselves.' On the contrary, the book is dedicated for the benefit of others ; every inscription is benevolent, and some are almost paternal. 'I have been in many countries, as you may see by this book, but in no place have I seen a tower equal to that of Laon. Here is the plan of the first-floor. Look forward and you will see the arrangement and all the elevation, and how the turrets change their forms,' *i.e.*, from square to octagon, as they rise. 'Meditate upon these, for if you desire to build similar great angle turrets you must choose a form of sufficient projection. Proceed carefully, and you will do as a wise and skilful man ought to do.'

Notice, besides the kind encouragement and good advice of the last sentence, that the instruction is not as with us to copy, but to 'choose a form' to be worked out. His sketch is not intended for a copy, but to be a memorandum ; the details



NORTH TOWER AT LAON.



DE HONECORT'S SKETCH.

are very negligently incorrect. Wilars, like Raphael and Shakespeare, and all true craftsmen, was no servile copyist, though he would adopt a good idea, and mature or modify it in his own artistic way. But it is notable how little reference he makes to his own work; there is but one small plan distinctly claimed by Wilars as his own, and of this scheme he scrupulously shares the merit with a fellow-workman. This was six centuries before the Pugin-Barry controversy. It is inscribed, 'Wilars de Honecort and Peter de Corbie contrived this presbyterium in a discussion together.' Confidence and co-operation, not rivalry and competition; certainly unbusinesslike, inferior men; 'workmen in the sense in which that word is generally understood; persons without the 'best and most refined intellects,' but 'ignorant and vulgar.'

Of De Honecort's sketch-book the late Professor Willis said: 'It is evident that the methods of drawing which it has presented to us are wholly insufficient to convey any idea of the exact proportions or artistic character of an edifice; but we see that in those days there could have been none of the mechanical copying which is the reproach and misfortune of our own. There was no sufficient power of delineation to enable a travelling architect to transfer a building or a detail to his sketch-book so completely as to admit of its being reproduced when its effect upon his eyes had been forgotten. He might have caught inspiration from the sight of great works, but unless he possessed a genius of the same order as that which originated them, he would have been unable to give the imitations the beauty and spirit of the originals, and he must have supplied so many details of his own that the building would necessarily acquire an individual character; neither can his series of geometrical devices relating to masonry and construction claim to represent the ordinary practice of his period; for a regularly educated architect would not make notes of matters familiar to himself and his fellow workmen.' Not, observe, his fellow draughtsmen. Also

notice that Wilars, who most evidently could not draw, was still 'a regularly educated architect.'

Thus in the times of real art there could have been no drawing-master architects. The working masons were the architects or masters, and themselves worked out their glorious designs. Wilars, for instance, being called to Hungary to build a church, did not, like modern architects, send pretty drawings to beguile the clergy and secure the job. The man himself, and not a set of drawings was required; and so he went to Hungary and *did* the work.

No comment need be made on this comparison between the medieval workmen and our modern architects; but worse remains behind. By far the most important members of the architectural profession are entirely unseen and never heard of by the outside world. These are the drawing clerks, who to their superiors are what the clever artisan or skilled mechanic is to the salesman, or the man that keeps the shop. They are the men who can be hired according to the nature of the order, and who prepare designs and drawings without any personal or public recognition, and, by comparison, at a beggarly amount of pay. Why these poor clerks submit to be the fuel to inflate a monstrous windbag, and to drudge for a profession that exhausts their energies and lives, and quite forbids them the delights and honours and rewards of recognized art-work, appears perhaps a mystery. Each year, as they advance in age, their case becomes more hard and hopeless, their position more precarious, and their work more weary and revolting; while their social independence and artistic rights are sacrificed to aggrandize the so-called heads of an unintelligent profession, and to please a public that is quite unconscious of the cost by which its transitory and ignoble pleasure is obtained.

The reason for it is that architects' assistants choose to pique themselves upon their pitiful gentility; and, clinging to the uncertain fortunes of their gambling trade, they make

themselves habitually followers of chance, and then its slaves. They know too well that those called eminent in the profession are mostly evil accidents, that many of the most 'important' are, even in their imitative way, incompetent, while many of the ablest are obscure ; and so, forgetting that the whole profession is a sham, they miserably wait, expecting Fortune's wheel to turn for them, while they still grind along in hopeless hope. Were they to make a friendly compact with the leading workmen, and, inviting them to their 'Association' or their 'Institute,' obtain from them good teaching in a handicraft, they might completely qualify themselves for architectural work. Then, cautiously combining with the workmen, they might form free companies or guilds of perfectly instructed, practical, artistic craftsmen. This we exhort the younger men to do ; that thus, instead of wasting their best years in fruitless expectation and corroding jealousy and grim despair, they may become the independent masters of their destiny, and all be started fairly, with assurance of success, in a joyful and a dignified career.

Under such new conditions let us see what would be the probable proportions, not the amounts, of the respective wages of the masters and their fellow workmen. In his work on 'Gothic Architecture in Spain,' Mr. Street mentions one Domingo Urteaga, who, in the middle ages, was a 'foreman of the works, and really the architect.' Domingo's salary was five sueldos a day ; his assistants received three sueldos, and his apprentices one and a half each. Our modern architects, being a superior class of men, will doubtless seek to imitate not only the peculiar style of ancient work, but the becoming, fair allotment of the ancient pay.

From time to time, when very virtuous, the public or the newspapers become intensely interested in the subject of 'commissions ;' and the architectural profession is most strictly questioned. In reply, the President and Secretary of the 'Institute' assure the world that they are ignorant of

such a practice among 'architects of known respectability.' We leave this answer for the reader's critical amusement; and we venture to propose another question. If it should be true that there are architects who take commissions, and are neither scrupulous nor candid, are they worse than those who judge and cheerfully condemn them? Is it safe to trust most men? Are the goods of manufacturers, commercial customs and the practices of trade habitually honest? Architects are much like other men, and if they are not everywhere trustworthy Nature pleads for them: 'to step aside is human.' They believe, no doubt, that their profession is as good as what the rest of men are doing; but it is, as a late 'President' so frankly said, 'a business,' and what business is our business men can tell.

In art, which simply acts upon material, a state of innocence is possible, and hence the value of true art as an abundant element in social polity. But business deals with men, and therefore virtue, in society a limited commodity, is needed. At the present epoch probably no group of men would claim this quality as their complete endowment; even members of the 'Institute' are not yet recognized exceptions in morality. A draughtsman is not born again when he is called an 'architect'; and the deluding prefix of 'profession' is a mere vulgarity, intended by this class of business agents to assert some vain superiority to trade. A barrister or surgeon takes no commission, but his fee, for his professional advice. Artistic workmen would receive their wages, or their stipulated pay, according to the value of their art; and business men gain profit, or experience loss in trade. But architects pretend to be a sort of trinity in unity, professional, artistic, and commercial, all in one; and such pretence is very business-like.

We bring no accusation against architects. In the profession there is certainly a full proportion of the current modicum of honesty, of men above suspicion or reproach. But the profession deals with contracts and trade bills; and

those who very much pretend to know, contractors, mutter that there have been 'architects of known respectability,' or otherwise unknown, who did not carefully announce at the 'Association,' or the 'Institute,' the fact or the amount of 'customary trade commissions' that they quietly received. Moreover, as commissions are, on high authority, declared to be the rule in business, architects who take them, and whose curious profession is admittedly 'a business,' may be said to act with merely business-like adroitness. In most architectural buildings there has been of late a marked increase in polished marble, carving, coloured glass, and costly metal work, which have, at times, afforded opportunity for sly percentages. But here again, it may be said, there is a plausible excuse. A five per cent. commission is the general rule for every kind of work; and either garden walls and factories and prisons must be overpaid for at this rate, or architects must build elaborate churches and luxurious houses in a very 'business' way, or for a desperately small net payment. The fact is that, without jobbing of some sort, involving pluralism, open or concealed—the difference is comparatively immaterial, for the whole system is unsound, unnatural and therefore vicious—the 'Profession' cannot stand. The public therefore might judiciously consider whether it is well to patronize a system that so tends to immorality, and which, moreover, causes them continual disappointment, with a painful sense of being mystified and duped. They can gain nothing by their feeble, intermittent murmurs; these the architects can fairly ridicule. They probably would say that the protesting public are themselves quite ready to obtain undue advantage when the chance occurs. For instance, architectural competitions are a scheme whereby a score of inexperienced persons\* play upon the eager hopes, ambition, and

\* Sir Edmund Beckett, in his published 'Lecture on the Parish Church at Doncaster,' says: 'When I found myself appointed a member of the building committee, I saw that there was no other person on it who would not disclaim any but a very general knowledge of architecture, or taste for that kind of study.'

cupidity of the profession to get drawings made for nothing, or for possibly a tithe of what they cost, that they may gratify their 'taste' and vanity, and use what they are pleased to call an opportunity for patronizing art. Of course the architects know how to treat the matter; as a late 'President' once said they 'are obliged.' And so their competition works are stamped with the prevailing character of English general society. Why should the public, then, complain?

The system of commissions is not limited to England: 'The rebuilding of my boat has cost £260, and Omar got back £10 by the sale of old wood and nails. He also gave me 2000 piastres, nearly £12, which the workmen had given him as a sort of backsheesh. They all pay one, or two, or three piastres daily to any 'Wakeel' (agent) who superintends; that is his profit, and it is enormous at that rate. I said, Why did you not refuse it? But Omar said they had pay enough after that deduction, which is always made from them, and that, in his opinion, therefore, it came out of the master's pocket, and was "cheatery"' (Lady Duff Gordon). Omar's sagacious practice has been sometimes used much nearer home, with good effect in cash and morals.

Vitruvius, the Roman architect, a classic among those who manufacture in the 'Imitative Styles,' though not perhaps accomplished as an artist, was intelligent and conscientious; and he thus delivers his afflicted soul: 'I have not sought to amass wealth by the practice of my art, neither is it wonderful that I am known but to a few. Other architects canvass and go about soliciting employment. What must he suspect who is solicited by another to be entrusted with the expenditure of his money but that it is done for the sake of gain and emolument? When, therefore, I see this noble science in the hands of the unlearned and unskilful I cannot blame proprietors who, relying on their own intelligence, are their own architects; since, if the business is to be conducted by the unskilful, there is at least more satisfaction in laying out

one's money at one's own pleasure rather than at that of another person.'

But Mr. Fergusson, in his instructive letter to 'The Builder,' says that 'any public body or private individual who would attempt to carry out any important or ornamental building in the present day without an architect would most probably have to repent of his temerity.' This is the second horn of the professional dilemma; for already Mr. Fergusson has told us in his Preface how the profession is untrue in principle and systematically wrong, straitened in intellect and condemned to failure. Let us then return to simple and imaginative building work, not imitative and important, nor yet ornamental, but genuine and artistic. Though 'the world is still deceived with ornament,' it is 'but for a little time,' and then, inevitably, disappointment comes. An ornamental picture or a statue, a reputed ornamental man or woman, must be wanting in intelligence and dull. Instead of ornament by the profession we can have the artisan and art; and this is our sole method of escape from Mr. Fergusson's dilemma.

Thus with frank confidence, arising from compassion and benevolent respect, we have endeavoured to inform our readers of the nature and Profession of an 'Architect,' to make the public understand what is the cause of their artistic misery, and of their impotence for good in architectural affairs; how for all this they are themselves to blame, and where they are to find the remedy. Their only hope of reformation is in self-reform, and in their prompt rejection of the strange conceit that other men, 'the working classes,' have been made to furnish luxuries for them, and to be kept in what is called 'their place.' Such notions, and such things, must have an end, which cannot be far distant, nor be very long delayed; and men of business and the middle classes should consider and obey the sensible command to 'honour all men,' and

esteem the aristocracy of work at least as highly as the oligarchy of the Stock Exchange.

The public also will eventually see that their own ignorance is the source of all the architectural evil they endure ; they will endeavour to learn something of the most important of their secular affairs, and make themselves acquainted with the fabric and construction of their homes. Those who would build judiciously should forswear leasehold tenure, luxury, and the architectural profession. None but a freehold site should be selected for a residence or for a work of art. Expensiveness, so fashionable from its charm for vulgar minds, should be eschewed. Then Mr. Fergusson's instructive 'History of Modern Architecture' should be well studied. In that very wholesome book, entirely free from archaeological and ritualist cant, an intelligent proprietor will see what the Profession of an 'Architect' has done, and will beware. No five per cent. commission-broker will be asked to send his drawings as professional director of the works. Men who *may* use their intellects, and will be always on the works to *do* them must of course direct them. Either educated working men should be the resident contractors for the work as well as the designers of the building, or an able workman, carefully selected, and in some cases possibly, to do the little setting-out required, a clerk should be engaged, at liberal, judicious salaries. A change of system seldom can be made by one clear step, and so in the transition state, as clerks and workmen are each only half instructed, it may be often needful to combine them and obtain a dual architect; the impotent and the blind helping each other and conjointly doing the artistic work of one sound man; but always present at the work, doing and not delegating that which they pretend to do. Such men would carry on the building with the zeal and interest of freedom and responsibility. With them the patron, or proprietor, whom we suppose to be a man of sense, would carefully devise the plans, commencing with the plainest

style of building. He would thus become as well acquainted with the structure of his house as with the details of his daily business ; and the work *in* which he lives and that *by* which he lives would equally and properly be understood. The emancipated under-workmen also would be quick to learn that they were now accounted better than machines, and so would have the stimulus of healthy pride and intellectual interest in their occupation. Their revived imagination would begin to work, and art would germinate, and five per cent. commissions and the multiplied, mysterious, often unknown items that are covered by a builder's tender, with the cost of all the luxury and foolish ornament that are the special product of the architectural profession would be saved. The working architects would study how to limit the expense, not to increase it ; how to do the best for their employer, not how they might make a public reputation for themselves ; and as the work proceeds the improvements that experience will frequently suggest would be adopted without fear of merciless demands and bills of extras. The result would be an economical and worthy specimen of workman's art, an honour to its sensible proprietor.

But now, as the result of building from professional designs, a ghastly crop of 'Villas,' 'Eagles' Nests,' and 'Granges,' constantly increasing year by year, is making England hideous. These expensive follies are a demonstration of the wealth and 'culture' of a sort of men who being called 'self-made' relieve the Providence above of great responsibility. They are not building art, but only graphic sketches done in wood and stone. The charming prettiness and manufactured 'picturesque' are soon discovered to be worthless and a bore ; and the perplexed proprietor is stamped as ill-conditioned, prominent, and vulgar.

For centuries past the great proprietors and men of wealth in countries nominally Christian have not in any sense been patrons of true art, but only votaries of pompous luxury.

Few scenes exhibit so much mental meanness as the mansion of a rich proprietor or peer. The endeavour to be imposing has been made the substitute for dignity and thought, and the whole pile is consequently found to be a costly and ridiculous imposture. A nobleman would need compassion and relief if custom made him always wear his coronet and ermine ; but in connection with his Castle or his Hall he frequently is just as much encumbered with absurdity. The style of work and furniture to suit a man of rank is founded on a mixture of French pompousness and feminine frivolity, with latterly the fashionable cant of antiquarian design. To substitute true art for such developments of folly and expense would be quite easy ; and the exigence is great. For an Earl to be the *operarius*, and conduct the works upon his family estate, would be a profitable and manly pastime, and would in honour equal one step higher in the order of nobility. To substitute a school of masons for a gang of poachers would ennoble any commoner ; and the efficient practice of the old masons' art, or of imaginative workmanship of any kind, would elevate the dignity and self-respect of any noble-minded gentleman or peer.

The status and condition of the workman is becoming year by year a question of increasing interest throughout the social scale. Already there are sons of peers engaged in commerce ; and, such are the rapid changes in the world, the grandson of a duke may possibly ere long embark in trade, or might ambitiously prefer to be a mason. And with ability, for there is no knowing what amount of latent talent may be found, another Phidias or Buschettus might arise, adding new splendour to some noble name. It seems important, then, that there should be no sense of degradation in the workman's sphere, but that his work should be esteemed as noble, since it leads to opportunities as great, as that of students in the classics or philosophy.

The pretty general contempt with which the workman is

regarded is a curious demonstration of the spirit of society. Gentlemen whose fathers or grandfathers were workmen, and who by their humble parents' handicraft and thrift are now saved from being, possibly inferior, artisans, are very orthodox about the workman's incapacity. And yet these men have all their lives been overwhelmingly indebted to the working man's intelligent ability. When happily he condescended to be born, the gentleman's first friend and helper was a workman, a chirurgeon, literally a handiworkman. Then the common men to whom 'the most refined' entrusts his life on board a ship or in a railway-train, the barrister who saves his property, the clergyman who piously directs his faltering devotion, are all workmen in their various ways, acting immediately with mind upon the subject of their work, the essence of true workmanship. To say that of these workmen some are educated men only declares the added value that instruction gives to practical ability. Each workman ought to be as well instructed, to complete his working education, as a surgeon or a barrister; not in the same way perhaps, but with at least as much judicious care. The notion that the primary instruction which is now declared to be the birth-right of the artisan will be accepted as sufficient is a very shallow notion. Bricklayers and masons, carpenters and smiths, will certainly obtain a public education for their sons, to fit them for their life and work, as good as that of any wrangler or Smith's prizeman. Moreover, these young men will then be paid, according to their powers, on equal terms with what are now called gentlemen, 'the best and most refined,' and the professions.

Thousands of young men are now enlisted in the architectural profession. They and their friends expect for them a light, genteel employment, giving the position, social and financial, due to gentlemen and scholars. These aspirants do not see the social revolution now in progress, less demonstrative but far more general than that of France. There the

few thousands of the aristocracy were the chief sufferers ; with us the millions of the middle class will feel the change. In but a few years' time the children of the labouring man will be as well conditioned in the world, as well prepared to assert their personal and mental claims before society, as the sole heir of any manufacturer or wealthy merchant. Young men will then become more promptly known ; their characters at school will be their capital, just like a college reputation ; and due credit will be given to capacity as freely as to mere hereditary wealth. Young working men, when thus endowed, will not remain subservient to a pernicious class of middle-men ; and probably in Parliament we soon shall find some representative of labour making the demand that public works shall all be planned and built by workmen who have made co-operative stores their study and example. And who could then deny them ? None can say that only 'gentlemen' can make a plan or fabricate designs.

These hard reckonings with the future, a result of long and careful observation of the past, have not been given as a prophecy, but are submitted as a friendly warning to the young and inexperienced hopefules whom we wish to save from lifelong disappointment and the evil chances of a treacherous career. They should despise the counterfeit gentility that makes two-thirds of men and women, in their social customs, idiots or slaves, and be prepared to *work* in any state of life to which they may be called. Each man and woman, up to the highest rank, should, like the old Hebrews and our medieval kings, be well instructed in a handicraft ; and then, when tribulation comes and the profession fails, our quondam students need not be completely overwhelmed, nor find themselves perplexed and tortured by the constant, sad soliloquy, 'I cannot *work* ; to beg I am ashamed.'

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THE BANE  
OF  
ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE.

BY  
JOHN T. EMMETT.

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*WE, in our ignorance, talk of education and of spreading education.*

*What is the education of the people—to read and write? Stupidity. It is the directing and educating their minds to great virtues and great things. Our education now turns on one subject, making money; our politics on one subject, making money—that is, buying and selling. I will not say that any pursuit need debase the mind; but if there is one more calculated than another to do so, it is making money. Our ancestors prohibited gentlemen from making money; we call this a prejudice, but it was not. A man by making money might become a gentleman; but when he was become a gentleman, his thoughts were to live in a higher sphere, and he was no more to be thinking how a penny might be saved or a penny got. The people understood this, and had an idea of a gentleman as above a trader, thinking his ideas would be above those of bargaining. Now the gentleman has gone, and therefore the respect for gentlemen has gone, and gentlemen hardly respect themselves.*—**LORD DALLING AND BULWER.**

*ERASMUS pretended, ‘If it was all true which Luther had written, it ought not to have been said, or should have been addressed in a learned language to the refined and educated.’*

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*The Pall Mall Gazette*, June 8, 1872; February 4, 1881.

*The Architect*, April 27, June 15, 1872; October 31, 1874.

*The Builder*, November 2, 1872; November 8, 1873; October 24, December 19, 1874; January 9, October 23, 1875; June 12, 1880.

*The Building News*, May 10, 1872; January 22, 1875; November 26, 1880.

*The Renaissance in Italy. The Fine Arts.* By J. A. SYMONDS.

*The Quarterly Review*, October, 1874.

*The Edinburgh Review*, April, 1875.

*A Book on Building.* By Sir EDMUND BECKETT, Bart, 1876.

*The British Quarterly Review*, April, 1880.

THE BANE  
OF  
ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE.

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IT is a question, for the men of intellect among the public to decide, whether our English architecture is to be the leading art, as God designed it, for the social and imaginative culture of the working classes, the great 'people' of the land, or whether it shall still, unhappily, remain a mystery for the vulgar, rich and poor ; a degradation for the artisan ; a business for a pluralist profession ; and a toy for vanity.

For several centuries the public throughout Western Europe have been more and more excluded from intelligent and homely interest in the art of building. They have paid most lavishly for quasi-architectural devices, which they are persistently instructed to admire. As each new work proceeds, the newspapers and magazines are furnished with commendatory notices by *dilettanti* of a literary turn, who indicate, in scholarly detail, and with a tone of wondering admiration, what they call the merits of the architect's design. The public listen vaguely, and accept. Of building art they have no practical or sympathetic knowledge ; and, though architecture in abundant ugliness surrounds them, and in absurd unfitness harasses their lives, they rest content with, and are possibly a little proud of, their sad ignorance. Building is 'low,' fit only for 'work-people,' quite

beneath the recognition of the upper classes and of cultivated persons ; they prefer ' fine art.' They learn from connoisseurs themselves what should be most admired, and so of course they know ; and, in their vacant, imitative way, they praise, and wonder, and pretend to be delighted. Thus, at festive meetings of the ' Academy ' and the ' Institute,' exalted personages speak in flattering terms of what they are supposed, by courtesy, to understand ; and, as each public building is completed, eager curiosity being for a little time aroused,

‘ The hasty multitude  
‘ Admiring enter, and the work some praise,  
‘ And some the architect.’

Indeed, in modern architecture, general authority declares that everything is satisfactory, and, making due allowances, ' whatever is is right.'

And yet the public are not permanently satisfied ; although they dance when played to, they have little joy. Their short factitious pleasure is soon ended ; and they then revolt, with dumb impatience ; being, in respect of building work, quite inarticulate. To supplement this general deficiency, and to assist the public to a comprehension of their architectural affairs, has been the object of some recent essays in ' The 'Quarterly' and 'British Quarterly' Reviews. These articles have also been the subject of particular discussion among architects and their associates ; and, as it may be found instructive to consider what these interested persons have to say, we will proceed to furnish some condensed quotations from their criticisms ; not, it should be noticed, from their merely incidental statements or remarks, but chiefly from their serious replies, distinctively *ad rem*. These criticisms and replies will show that what has recently been said respecting modern architecture is, at least in theory, approved by the profession, and that our account of the contemporary architectural system is most strictly accurate and true.

By way of introduction we will quote a non-professional critique, which gives a *résumé* of our contention. ‘The Pall Mall Gazette,’ referring to an essay on ‘The State of English Architecture,’ says: ‘The Reviewer’s sympathies lie with the ‘time when, according to his confident statement, the work ‘and the workman were everything; when architecture was ‘the spontaneous efflorescence of the cultivated imagination ‘and ready hand of the mason, and design was the intelligent ‘control of the superior, himself a workman; his conclusion ‘from these premises being, that the modern architect, the ‘soft-handed professional person, with his paraphernalia of ‘“office,” drawing clerks, commission, &c., is an abuse that ‘should be done away with at any cost of vested interests. ‘The said incubus being removed, he anticipates the recovery ‘by the workman of the old inventive spirit, and that the ‘architecture of the future may be safely intrusted to his ‘hands.’

‘The Architect,’ with creditable boldness, says: ‘The ‘opinions here set forth have an unquestionable foundation in ‘fact. “The Quarterly” critic is no doubt right in his as- ‘sumption, that architecture has become more a profession ‘than an art. The truth is, that the public themselves have ‘created this state of things. People rush after names, and ‘the result is a monopoly by which certain men are rendered ‘incapable of performing efficiently *and honestly* that which ‘each client supposes to be the personal work of his architect; ‘and thus commissions can only be carried through by the ‘help of more or less able clerks.’ And—according to ‘The ‘Building News,—“workmen should be competent to design ‘their work; an architect should work more in presence ‘of his buildings and less at his desk; and the unhealthy ‘accumulation of practice in a few fashionable offices is ‘deplorable. Every one admits that the designer should ‘*assiduously* supervise the execution of his work; and the ‘neglect or compromise of this duty is an essential error.

‘The article mentions five things which prevent our architectural success: these are (1) the influence of the ignorant public; (2) the false position of architects; (3) the over-growth of certain architectural practices; (4) the non-employment of the workman’s mental power; and (5) the custom of building on short leases. The first is enough to ruin our art. The majority of people prefer inferior architecture.’

But in ‘The Builder’ we are told that ‘the transparent fallacy which underlies the whole series of attacks is that, because every true artist is a workman, therefore every workman is a true artist.’ Nothing of the kind; but since, as is admitted, ‘every true artist is a workman,’ it is evident that modern architects, not being workmen, are *not* artists; and the buildings for which they make drawings, and which they so absurdly call their ‘works,’ are all, artistically, bad. If every ‘ornamental and artistic’ building that has been produced by draughtsmanship, in the last forty years for instance, were destroyed, there would be neither loss nor injury but rather great relief to art, and corresponding benefit to the community. The grievance is, that under drawing-masters workmen never can be artists; and it is this fact, so evident in its results, contrasted with the work produced when workmen were all ‘free,’ that is the condemnation of the architectural profession. Workmen, like the rest of men, are mostly born artistic; and, by a mere law of nature, they would, if left free from draughtsmen’s most incompetent control, become, in various degrees of merit, real artists.

Still we have gained the admission, that every true artist is a workman; and yet in the same paper it is said that ‘art can be but dimly apprehended by any one who speaks of it as labour, enduring as is the toil of the true artist; for art in its essential nature is the embodiment of the conceptions of the imagination; it is the outward and visible form given to the

‘creations of the fancy.’ In its essential nature art is labour, or where is ‘the toil of the true artist,’ whence is the ‘embodiment,’ and how is ‘the visible form given?’ Of course art must be labour, vivified; the workman giving it its life. The fact is that these writers are perplexed, and so their arguments are ‘fallacies.’

For instance, referring to a quotation of Plato’s statement, that you could not buy (*πρίασθαι*) a master workman (*ἀρχιτέκτονα*) even for ten thousand drachmæ, ‘The Builder’ desperately says, ‘It is convenient to the Reviewer to translate *πρίασθαι* into its plain, blunt, literal meaning, to buy; ‘though it must be obvious that it is here equivalent to hiring ‘or engaging.’ ‘It is convenient’ to speak the truth, although this writer seems to think the contrary is obvious. *Πρίασθαι* means to buy, and no more means to hire, or is equivalent to engaging, than it means to sell. If it meant hiring, time would be essential to the statement, but no time is quoted; and, for hiring, the verb *μισθόω* would of course be used. The error is an old one, and was formerly committed by ‘Athenian ‘Aberdeen;’ whose classical and architectural scholarship were equally inaccurate.

Continuing in Hellas: ‘It may be possible that the Greek ‘architect was more on the work than the modern one, and ‘that he did not make elaborate drawings beforehand.’ Undoubtedly; but this Greek system is impossible for modern architects, and hence the inartistic character of all their work. Yet, though the architectural profession is thus inartistic and incapable, there is involved in it an influential element of modern business and society; and, though it is in error, and unsound, and certainly is doomed, we hear ‘it will die hard.’ Discussion may, however, reconcile us to the change, and save the public from the shock of a catastrophe.

The leading architectural papers are indeed preparing for the inevitable end. ‘The Building News’ declares that ‘fashionable architects are overdone with business. Instead

‘of tempting one man to distribute his thought and attention over twenty different works at a time, architecture would obviously gain if each work had the care of a competent designer.’ And ‘The Builder’ contends that ‘the architect should be as much on *his building* as possible’—not the contractor’s building, but his own; that is, he must be a master-workman—‘he should not undertake what he cannot personally look after; he should be able to improve his design if necessary; and every artistic workman should have credit for his work; the architect remaining the directing spirit of the whole:’ which is entirely our doctrine.

These quotations show that the artistic theory of the workman’s leadership and conduct of the architectural design is easy to appreciate, and is practically well defined. But this itself appears to be a cause of difficulty. Certain people will accept and modify a statement into contrariety, just as soft wax receives the impression of a seal and then displays it perfectly reversed. We give a specimen, from ‘The Builder’: ‘Would any one but the Reviewer assert that a grand building would most likely be obtained by trusting the works to the combined efforts of a band of masons without a directing head, and with the stipulation that they are not to make any drawings?’ The enquiry has the semblance of a well-considered misconstruction. As the writer probably would say, ‘It is convenient.’ But, to let our readers judge of the veracity or otherwise with which we have to deal, we furnish the remarks which have thus clumsily been travestied:— ‘Of course there was subordination, but the subordination was all within the workman class.’\* ‘The master-workman would *make the plan, arrange the elevations*, and be, in fact, the foreman of the work.’ ‘He is the ruler of workmen; he must assign to the individual workmen their appropriate task till they have completed the work.’ ‘At the Parthenon Phidias was the chief superintendent of the works,’ as a

\* ‘The Quarterly Review,’ April, 1872, p. 305.

resident workman, ‘the architects, or master-workmen, being ‘under him.’ ‘This was precisely the state and position of the ‘medieval master-workman ; and, in fact, all true building ‘methods are essentially the same.’ ‘The workmen worked, ‘after their manner, without *extraneous tutelage*.’ \*

The complete perversion of these clear, consistent, and repeated statements, may, however, have been due to mental failure ; but another patient quickly ‘lifts his head,’ and, with emphatic amplitude, repeats the folly. ‘Because the word ““ architect ” nowhere occurs in the records of medieval ‘buildings, nor anything which can be considered its precise ‘equivalent, it is assumed that these great structures arose ‘of themselves as it were, by a unanimous impulse among ‘workmen having no chief instructor, and working upon no ‘preconcerted plan. The inference is of course obvious ; take ‘away the architect, forbid the making of any preliminary ‘drawings, turn loose a band of “inspired workmen” upon ‘the site, and the building will “rise like an exhalation,” ‘and repeat all the glory of medieval architecture in the ‘most natural and simple manner’ (‘Fortnightly Review’).

This quotation serves to show with what inverted perspicacity we have to deal ; how very ‘hard,’ as we were told, this curious profession dies.

With much apology and patience we will state once more the true historic architectural method, by which ‘inspiration’ always came. The real architects, of every age of art, were working men, and not mere draughtsmen, like our modern ‘architects,’ who are not working men or architects at all. In the great periods of medieval art, the architects could draw but little better than our modern men can work ; but they could actually build, which modern architects, pretentious and incapable, only profess to do. They were the chiefs of the workmen, constantly remaining on the work, directing and conferring with their fellow-artisans. Thus when Niccola

\* ‘The Quarterly Review,’ October, 1874, pp. 358-365.

Pisano, 'the great founder of Italian art, visited Siena in 1266, 'for the completion of his pulpit in the Duomo, he found a 'guild of sculptors, or *taglia-pietri* (stone-cutters), in that city, 'governed by a rector and three chamberlains. Instead of re- 'garding Niccola with jealousy, these craftsmen only sought to 'learn his method. Accordingly it seems that a new impulse 'was given to sculpture in Siena; and *famous workmen arose*, 'who combined this art with that of building. The chief 'of these was Lorenzo Maitani, who *designed* and carried 'to completion the Duomo of Orvieto during his lifetime. 'While engaged in this great undertaking, Maitani *directed* 'a body of architects, stone-carvers, bronze-founders, mosaists, 'and painters, gathered together into a guild from the chief 'cities of Tuscany. We must give to Maitani, the master 'spirit of the company, full credit for the sculpture carried 'out in obedience to his general plan. The Duomo of Orvieto, 'by giving *free scope* to the school of Pisa, marked a point in 'the history of sculpture. It would be difficult to find else- 'where even separate works of greater force and beauty 'belonging to this, the architectural, period of Italian sculp- 'ture. The subjects selected by these *unknown craftsmen* for 'illustration in marble are in many instances the same as 'those afterwards painted by Raphael and Michael Angelo in 'Rome; and *nowhere* has the whole body of Christian belief 'been set forth with method more earnest and with vigour 'more sustained' ('Renaissance in Italy—The Fine Arts').

How different in spirit, and in method and result, from modern work. We beg the student to read once again, and even to commit to memory, this picturesque historical epitome of the artistic method in architecture, which raised up such 'famous' working-men. No doubt these workmen were, like Bezaleel and Aholiab, 'inspired.' The thing appears impossible to modern architects; such inspiration they are sure has not occurred in their time or in their experience.

We have been told by some philosopher that 'architecture

‘is a graphic art,’\* an art of drawing, therefore not the art of building, as the word expressively means; and architectural work is superficial only, done on paper or on boards. We consequently understand that London is an aggregate of scenes, not buildings, and we are all, as in a theatre, pretending to believe in their solidity. Each house, it seems, is but a show of architectural drawings, and we do not enter, but inspect it. Wilars of Cambray, the medieval artist, who, as Professor Willis told us, could not draw, was therefore not an architect, and the cathedral that he built never in fact existed. This kind of metaphysic may be current among architectural ‘Professors,’ but by unsophisticated people architecture is supposed to be a plastic art, the chief development of solid form. Our drawing-masters might go on for years designing, but without the workman all their efforts would not give us practicable buildings.

Houses were made before drawings, which, like tools and scaffolding, are only helps to building. The design is not the thing, but only an account, extremely superficial, of the thing proposed; ‘the *work’s* the thing,’ and workmen are the real architects. Again, although a carver frequently makes sketches, more or less elaborate, as tests of form, his special work is not accounted graphic; he is a carver who can *do* the work; his art is evidently plastic. On the other hand, although a painter may use solid figures as his guides, his painting is not therefore plastic art; his previous sketches also are but memoranda. Were he to do no more than sketch and draw, he would not be a painter, but a draughtsman, like our architects, and his productions would not be pictorial, but would, like theirs, be classed as ‘graphic’ only. Thus, then, we find, by studying their own apologists, that modern architects are drawing-masters only, graphic composers, totally devoid of real architectural or plastic art.

The constant use of drawings is indeed an evidence of prac-

\* ‘Edinburgh Review,’ April, 1875.

tical ineptitude. ‘The French architect has made very pretty ‘drawings of the mosque here, both outside and in ; it is a ‘very good specimen of modern Arab architecture, and he ‘won’t believe it could be built without ground plan, elevations, ‘&c. ; which amuses people here, who build without any such ‘invention’ (Lady Duff Gordon’s ‘Last Letters from Egypt’). The old masons, ancient and medieval, sometimes made rough outlines to assist them in their work, but then these outlines were *their own* preparatory mason’s work. Thus on the lead and granite roofs of some French buildings we still find the outlines traced by medieval workmen. At Mycenæ, ‘below the sculpture at the foot of a tombstone, we see two ‘spiral ornaments imperfectly scratched in the stone, as if ‘the artist had made a trial sketch of what he was going to ‘carve on the tablet. Our present artists make their sketches ‘on paper, but the early Mycenean had neither paper and ‘pencil nor pen and ink at his disposal, and so he made his ‘trial sketch upon the stone itself, but on its lower part, ‘which was to be sunk in the ground, and was therefore ‘hidden from the eye’ (Schliemann’s ‘Mycenæ’).

We have, it seems, obtained encouragement and help from the light literature of draughtsmanship ; now let us listen to the eloquence that cheers the ‘Institute’ and the ‘Association,’ which appear to be the senior and junior houses of the architectural Profession.

At the Association, a few years ago, Professor Ker—imagine a ‘Professor’ Chersiphron !—assured the meeting that ‘he ‘found the profession of architecture most unpopular—the ‘most unpopular profession of modern times. He considered ‘its position most critical, and he found the reason of this un- ‘popularity in the prevalence of Fashion in Architecture. ‘What is to be done ? He would recommend increased atten- ‘tion to the stone and mortar work in architecture. In pro- ‘portion to the skill in mere draughtsmanship, just in this ‘proportion he thought he detected the loss of the solid qual-’

‘ties of good design.’ Yet this discerning *dictum* curiously controverts the ‘graphic’ notions of the writer in ‘The Edinburgh Review.’ But the ‘Professor’ is, in what he *says*, essentially correct; the more there is of draughtsmanship and ‘graphic art’ the more the plague of pluralism spreads, and architecture sinks into a business in the wholesale way, conducted by commission agents, ‘architects of eminence.’

And yet our architects are not especially to blame; they are but items in society. Their calling, or profession, has been long established as a ‘business,’ and the world approves; it ministers to vanity, and that is what the world requires. Moreover, the Profession is not an affair of common sense, but an elaborate system of performances, that strike the imagination of the public, just as circus horsemanship surprises little children. That a man should ride one horse, or undertake one building, is a common-place affair, quite useful doubtless, but not striking. Whether his building or his horsemanship are good or bad, the public do not know; but, as they very much admire the equestrian who, in some straddling way, pretends to ride three horses at a time, so architects are valued, not according to their work, but to their reputation for a marvellous professional width of stride. A clever man may inefficiently and awkwardly control as many as three simple buildings or three ambling steeds close side by side, but how can he pretend to compass and conduct some ten or twenty? Yet a cleric, or a corporation, or indeed most men, think it an advantage, something even of an honour, to have one of these ridiculous performers in their pay. The clergy are especially absurd in this respect. Among themselves such pluralism has been almost universally abolished, and it is not said that formerly, when half a dozen benefices were in one control, beneficence resulted. But a dean or rector will actually be proud to say that his cathedral, or his chancel, has been ‘splendidly restored’ by some excessive pluralist; believing that this vanity of his is

somehow to his credit. Such men listen to the common chatter about 'art,' and probably have joined in it, until they think that art is meant for *their* particular delight and illustration. Thus they never see nor understand that art cares nothing about them ; that all its interest is in the workmen who produce it ; and that when these working men attain to full possession of the good that art provides for them, its influence overflows, and charms and glorifies the rest of humankind.

There used to be a story of an 'architect of eminence' whose bill, a startling one, was criticised by a Right Reverend Father. The divine remarked that the account was equal to a curate's yearly salary. 'That,' said the architect, 'is true 'enough; but then, my lord, you must remember that among 'architects I am a bishop.' It was a clever answer, but not true ; the man was but a pluralist, with architectural clerics, curates, we might say, in charge at all his works ; and it was said that he, like others similarly known to Fame, gained his chief introduction to that prating damsel through the help of an unrecognized assistant draughtsman.

In a discussion at the Institute of British Architects on 'The Hope of English Architecture,' a prepared critique began with the acknowledgment, that 'the Reviewer had 'apparently been influenced by a conscientious desire for the 'reform and advancement of the building art, and that regard 'for the public good had prompted him to write ;' and it further said that 'if there had not been a substratum of truth 'in his strictures upon modern professional practice no reply 'would have been necessary.' The late M. Viollet-le-Duc was then largely quoted : thus, 'He says that in the fourteenth 'century an architect was "un homme de l'art que l'on indem- 'nise de son travail personnel." People who wished to build 'provided materials and hired workmen ; neither estimate, 'nor valuation of the work, nor the administration of the funds 'appears to have concerned the architect.' A wise and sensible relief; 'the man of art, whose payment is for his own labour,'

will be, generally, less efficient than his neighbours in the faculty of number, and in genius for commerce and finance. The master of the work, or *operarius*, was the man who, in the middle ages, undertook all inartistic duties ; and in our own time the multitude of worthless architects might possibly be utilised for this inferior business.

In the discussion at the Institute it was properly explained that, ‘if the principles of construction are not now uniformly respected, it is because they are not understood by the people. Yet the ruling principle of every *useful* art was preached twenty-four centuries ago. “What!” said Aristippus, “can a dung-basket be beautiful ?” “Of course it can,” said Socrates, “and a golden shield can be very ugly, if the one be well fitted for the purpose and the other not.”’ A dictum much misunderstood by those who do not recognize the play upon a word. *Kalós*, as a generic term, means not merely beautiful, but excellent in its way, or for its purpose ; and it was applied by Socrates, much as the word beautiful is applied by us, to many things devoid of beauty. Socrates was fond of paradox, he liked to startle people ; he had also the Athenian gift of humour, and would have been amused to find that architects of any kind or period were ready to associate dung-baskets with their buildings in the element of beauty.

Continuing the discourse, Professor Ker was of opinion that ‘the workman of the present day was being made too much of ; and they ought not to contribute to raise him to a false position, from which he must some day or other fall.’ A word of cautious sympathy, induced perhaps by serious, professional self-contemplation. On the other hand, although two years before Professor Ker ‘had found the profession of architecture to be most unpopular,’ it was now ‘only writers in ‘Reviews, &c., who wrote of what they did not understand, ‘who expressed any disrespect of architects.’ Professor Ker, however, had already told the Institute that architects themselves ‘had a habit of ridiculing each other’s efforts. No one

‘would venture to exhibit a design of any kind, in any style, ‘without calculating to a certainty upon exciting the derision ‘of the whole body of his colleagues.’ The Architectural Conference, to whom this statement was addressed, quite philosophically took it ‘in extremely good part; it commended ‘itself to the general mind as a palpable hit;’ and yet the Reviewer has been said to be too indiscriminating in his censure. Architects, of course, do laugh at one another, for they must at times perceive, and even understand, the drollery of their position; \* but the public also might consider who it is that pays for the amusement.

After the Professor comes an amateur, Sir Edmund Beckett, who, with customary frankness, told the Institute what ‘perhaps it was not a pleasant thing to hear, that the public were ‘not satisfied with the present state of architecture.’ The President, the late Sir Gilbert Scott, also ‘thought that when ‘they looked at the forms of architecture which the whole ‘world pronounced to be wonderful, there could be no doubt ‘by what manner of men they were originated and carried ‘into execution. The writer of these reviews had done some- ‘thing in directing their attention to the difference between ‘the old workman and the architect of the present day; the ‘points of difference he had drawn proved clearly that there ‘was no very great distinction between the architect and the ‘workman in those days.’ But the difference between the old workman and the modern architect is total and extreme; it cannot be ‘exaggerated.’ The old masters produced ‘forms ‘of architecture which the whole world pronounced to be ‘wonderful;’ the modern architect is said to ‘excite the ‘derision of the whole body of his colleagues.’ The old masters did not ‘bring disgrace upon architecture;’ nor were they ‘destroyers of architecture, and the disgrace of

\* ‘*Vetus autem illud Catonis admodum scitum est, qui mirari se aiebat quod non rideret haruspex haruspicem quum vidisset*’ (*Cicero, de Divinatione*, ii. 24); and both Cato and Cicero were members of the Institute.

‘the age,’ as Sir Gilbert Scott assured us ‘an immense multitude’ of architects now are. The Reviewer never used expressions more severe and general than these; and, when compared with such professional self-accusation, all our criticisms are but weak and reticent and gentle.

The reason is that we have hope, and so can easily be moderate; but at the Institute there is despair. Sir Gilbert Scott admitted that ‘he did not know how in the world the case was ‘to be met, though he had thought about it a good deal. He ‘confessed he did not know what the hope of architecture was.’ This being so, might not the Reviewer’s ‘hope’ be welcomed?

It is then well established, and accepted at the Institute of Architects, that medieval architecture was entirely designed by working men, and not by ‘gentlemen’ or draughtsmen; that all these craftsmen’s work was good, and in its higher qualities almost sublime; but that of modern work a very modest minimum is passable as a pretentious imitation of the repudiated workmen’s style, and all the rest falls off to multitudinous disgracefulness. We quote the late President again: ‘One of the most marked characteristics of the production of the great periods of architecture is that *no really bad* architecture is *ever* to be found among them. Who ever ‘heard of a work of the Greeks, at the great period of their ‘art, which they would presume to call bad architecture? ‘While in the works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries ‘the same masterly skill, and the same studious handling, are ‘found in the simple village church as in the noblest cathedral. ‘Nay, one is often disposed to uncover one’s self in humble ‘reverence before the work of some unheard of carpenter or ‘mason in an obscure village. No contrast could be more ‘marked than the difference between the present state of ‘things and that which prevailed at the great eras alluded ‘to. Instead of each work in its style displaying the same ‘knowledge and instinctive sentiment, the same careful, wise, ‘and thoughtful handling, the reverse of this is actually the

‘case. From each of our art camps productions are put forth of the highest and most contemptible character; while, I fear, a large number of the buildings which will represent our period are of that negative kind which, being neither hot nor cold but only lukewarm, will excite but a sickly emotion.’

This concluding sentence is however too extensive in its scope; it fairly states the quality of what are called the best, the exceptional few, of our contemporary works. Their worth is ‘negative;’ they are not badly built nor incorrect, but they are wholly destitute of true artistic character and power; ‘lukewarm and sickly.’

Then, skilfully replying on the whole discussion, the discerning author of the paper said: ‘There must have been ‘truth in the article on “The State of English Architecture,” ‘for only the truth stings; and I am confirmed in this opinion ‘by the knowledge that many architectural assistants—‘Associates of the Institute, who have done, and are still ‘doing, good service to their masters—believe much of that ‘article to be true. I am convinced that in many instances ‘the actual system of practice does not conduce to artistic ‘excellence, nor is it fair to the junior and subordinate mem-‘bers of the profession. I believe that members of the ‘Institute might introduce a practical reform.’

Another reader at the Institute immediately showed how such reform is to be made. ‘It might be an improvement if ‘we had a greater number of competent men, among whom ‘our great works might be distributed, so that to each the ‘architect might give his whole time and thoughts.’ Here is the whole requirement stated in two words—competence and distribution—so that men of sense may give their constant thought, and practical ability, to one single building work, and thus produce a work of real art.

Some few months later Mr. Beresford Hope, a reputed connoisseur, who seems often to address the Institute, was quite emphatic on ‘the craze of the day, “the workman-

‘architect ;’ the idea that Ignorance should be divinely and ‘miraculously gifted with the power of producing more beautiful things than Education and Instruction. It would take a ‘good many articles in “The Quarterly Review” to convince ‘him that the workman would become a heaven-born Phidias ‘when he had no capital at all.’

We have more than once or twice, in sheer compassion, put aside quotations from the Fellows of the Institute of Architects. The Profession, in a way that Mr. Fergusson explains, has evidently a deteriorating influence on the minds of those connected with it ; and for all who are engaged in its injurious toil we have the pity that experience compels. But for the self-complacency of connoisseurs there need be small consideration ; for some forty years or more these gentlemen have been ubiquitous in public architectural affairs ; the busy advocates especially of church, and abbey, and cathedral restoration, in the flashy, sumptuous style. Often of high character, accomplished, well-conditioned, and acknowledged leaders in the world of ‘taste,’ but in the world of art deluded sciolists, their influence on architecture has been thoroughly injurious. They have reduced it to a show of pedantry, and trumpery church ornament ; and it thus becomes for them a means of personal distinction, and of a peculiar kind of social prominence : they represent the dangerous little knowledge to which more abundant ignorance defers. Their custom is to make professional and other architectural meetings opportunities for much ‘amusing’ oratorical display ; and being dilettante in ecclesiology they, often very quaintly, pose as friends and special champions and defenders of the Church. Yet, with their gentle flock of clerical admirers, they are constant dupes of the Profession ; the chief patrons of that jobbing pluralism which has now become the bane of English architecture.

Several months before, as if prophetically to anticipate our obscurantist connoisseur, the late enlightened President had

told the Institute that the old craftsman architect or master was no craze; that everywhere and always he was most divinely gifted; that his artistic knowledge was complete; that his instruction and his education in his work were perfect; and we may add the obvious remark, that what the workman always was until oppressed by connoisseurs and clerics he may yet become again. Sir Gilbert Scott may also possibly have thought what we presume to say, that 'Ignorance' is evidently not divinely gifted; and that our connoisseur's emphatic disbelief, that any craftsman destitute of 'capital' could possibly be heaven-born, is strikingly in character. Few other men would have the genius for such an estimate of heavenly worth, and for so broad an explanation of the local claims and the celestial influences of 'capital.' An ancient craftsman, most divinely gifted, used to say of heaven, how hard it was for men of capital to enter there.

Had he not so frankly told the Institute of his defective powers of apprehension, Mr. Beresford Hope's objection would appear strong evidence of lamentably irreligious education, or of careless, not to say neglected, Bible reading. In the earliest page of sacred history we find that Adam was 'put into the garden of Eden, where was every tree that was 'pleasant to the sight, to dress it,' as an artist, 'and to keep 'it,' wholly without capital. But it is further said that when he listened to the woman, whom the serpent, the first connoisseur, had tempted, and had tasted of the tree of knowledge, he was changed. He ceased to be a heaven-born genius; his eyes were opened, and vain knowingness began. The fallen artist workers were then driven from the pleasant garden, and compelled to till the 'cursed ground,' and made, like modern connoisseur-afflicted artisans, to 'eat in sorrow' and to live in shame.

Considering their own abundant incapacity, the objection to the workman's 'ignorance' comes very curiously from connoisseurs, who ought at least to know that they themselves

are only conversant about the gossip, or 'the things of art,' and not with art itself. They have not even learnt to make a Gothic window or a door; and yet, in compound ignorance, they assume that those who can do this are their inferiors. The workman is directly on the road of architectural knowledge, and the connoisseurs and draughtsmen are entirely off it. Learning and science never made an architect, though now and then they have developed a composer. They are both distinct from art; and when connected with it may, by foolish use, be made unspeakably injurious. The workman at the grand climacteric of art had very little learning; scarcely any that was studiously acquired. The technics of his art were his almost by birth, or by unconscious, childish habitude; and in the history of art nothing is more evident and interesting than the workman's carelessness about the past, his ignorance of archæology, his indifference to all he *knew* of former work, and his amazing persevering impulse to *make* all things new. He was a poet, not a sciolist; a *maker* of imaginative work, of which our connoisseurs are very proud to know the glossary, and something of its date and history. The knowledge of these *dilettanti* is but scientific, 'that in 'which all men agree: knowledge therefore at its lowest term; 'but the individual expression of the poet is the highest,' the expression of the man himself, and not of his scholasticism. He develops thoughts, that other men may know; he does not 'know,' he *sees*, and so produces elements for knowledge, widening creation. In architecture all this individual expression is by work, and so the craftsman, liberated and allowed to think, and to create while working, is the only hope of architecture. Connoisseurs and draughtsmen are the men of science; architectural therefore only 'at the lowest term.'

A few years since the Ordinary of Newgate wrote an interesting letter to 'The Times' commending a new workmen's club at Westminster; where, as he said, the Hall had been recently 'built by the working men themselves; and 'not only

‘so, they were their own architects.’ This transaction was referred to in ‘The Quarterly Review’ as ‘the latest instance of ‘true building master workmanship;’ the workmen, as in times of art, conducting their own work without a drawing-master’s interference. The Reverend Ordinary’s statement that ‘the ‘building is very handsome’ was judiciously omitted; but that ‘the plans and elevations had been beautifully drawn by one ‘of the members’ was said to make this workman’s ‘little ‘front more satisfactory and respectable than the Charing Cross ‘Hotel or the Royal Academy façade.’

For several centuries the workmen have been banished from the realms of art, and systematically hindered from their old intelligent co-operation in artistic building work. At length there is a slight but hopeful indication of a change; like medieval masters, they design and work together by themselves. Of course their brother ‘artists,’ the ‘superior class,’ were quick to recognize and welcome this endeavour to improve the working men’s condition; and to cheer the first aspiring effort of the men who ‘do the work’ for which they ‘get the praise,’ and by whose aid they gain their own position in the world. Here was an opportunity for manifesting in a gentle way their own superiority. Unhappily they missed it. At a special meeting of the Institute, assembled to discuss and to repudiate ‘The Hope of English Architecture,’ the workman’s feeble but spontaneous undertaking was received with derision by the whole body, just as we have heard they treat a fellow architect’s professional designs; and thus ingenuously they showed themselves to be ‘inferior.’

The critic’s circumspect approval of the method of this workman’s work has been described as ‘admiration’ of the architectural result, and as adducing the small front as ‘the one successful effort of modern architecture.’ We are dealing with a class of men who ‘may not use their intellects;’ and so are possibly unable to distinguish between ‘effort’ and ‘success,’ or to perceive that when a method is

approved there is no necessary reference to result. All that was said in the Review might well have been advanced without the slightest knowledge or examination of the building. This was designed by working men in somewhat of the medieval working master's way, and thus is evidently far 'more satisfactory and respectable' than the neighbouring productions of the drawing-masters' Institute. Indeed some delicate apology is due to the Portcullis Club for the degrading and unkind comparison. The working members of the club did not deface a dignified and monumental composition, like Lord Burlington's well-studied elevation, nor erect an imitation of a royal monument and a memorial cross as an hotel advertisement and tavern sign.

Returning to the Institute, we find the late President thus gravely cautious: 'With regard to the question of vernacular architecture, they should each do the best they could, according to the ability God had given them.' Under the present 'graphic' system no one knows what latent architectural ability our modern architects possess. In many a drawing-master's office there may be some undiscovered Phidias or Vischer, who in a workman's shop might be developed as a real artist; but God has certainly not given even men like these ability to make a dozen buildings at a time, all works of art. Still further, the late President most candidly declared that, 'as it is, five pupils out of six sent to architects are worth 'nothing in the world; and'—let the public note this thorough and authoritative condemnation of themselves and of the present system—'they stood as good a chance of getting on 'as any one else.'

A second connoisseur, Sir Edmund Beckett, a most friendly correspondent of the Institute, considers that the late Sir Gilbert Scott's evasion of the question is a 'declaration that 'the idea of vernacular architecture ever again existing is 'absurd; ' and he adds, 'The present confusion or universality 'of styles, which we must take as a datum or fact beyond

‘contending against, may be a cause of the decline and almost  
‘disappearance of any public architectural criticism.’

Very true: since modern buildings are but inartistic and chaotic compositions, each beholder may object to or approve of them exactly as his individual whimsy dictates. Critics can regard with thoughtfulness, and judge with great respect, a work of veritable art; but inartistic, imitative buildings are mere matters of scholasticism or caprice, and then of trade; and, save as warnings, not worth notice. Criticism has in them no valid occupation; they are things of what the connoisseurs call ‘taste,’ of costliness and luxury, of fashionable names or styles, and even of a grim or sumptuous ecclesiology. Many a draughtsman has attained to what is reckoned ‘eminence’ by sanctimonious pandering to the silly, wholly inartistic, High Church school.

The candid mentor also wrote to the assembled architects: ‘Whatever you do, don’t call yourselves “artists.” An artist is a man who executes, whether he more or less designs besides; and ranges from a Phidias or Apelles down to a ballet-dancer or a cook. You are artists in respect of your drawings, but not in respect of the buildings made from them; and experience has shown that there is no connection between the power of drawing nice architectural pictures and the power of producing fine buildings.’

Sir Edmund Beckett is a ready writer and a lecturer on building. In his books there is much useful information; he might even claim to be the recognized Vitruvius of the period. Among other things he tells us: ‘Critics may be right in saying that the modern and increasing severance between working and general superintendence, and designing, tends not to exalt architecture, as its professors pretend it does, but to degrade it more and more into a trade for making money by the help of clerks. But the public, who will not take the trouble to understand a little of these subjects for themselves, must take architects as they are. In

‘ spite of all that is said at “opening festivities,” and other occasions when people meet to glorify one another, nobody can hear building talked about among friends without seeing that there is a deep and settled conviction that the much talked of “Hope of Architecture” is little but despair.’

To this condition, then, the connoisseurs have brought us. But Sir Edmund Beckett is himself an architect; he has ‘substantially designed sundry churches, and other buildings of considerable size.’ Of these the plans are good enough, the ‘graphic’ elevations are sufficiently ‘correct,’ and all the work is solid and well done; the buildings are however wholly destitute of true artistic feeling, they are coarse and dull. The railway churches at Peterborough and Doncaster might have been designed by some ambitious, unimaginative engineer, without artistic faculty or power, who had gathered his details from books, with no perception of propriety or scale; thus illustrating with peculiar force Sir Edmund Beckett’s dictum, that ‘there is no connection between the power of ‘making architectural drawings and the power of producing ‘fine buildings.’

Two designs for the restoration of the west end of St. Albans Abbey Church have recently been published. One is by an architect, and is as weak as any other product of the Institute, mere accidental features being made essential elements of the design. But the rejected elevation seems a work of power and graceful fancy when compared with the design accepted from Sir Edmund Beckett. This design is just the sort of thing that some ‘small architect’ would set his youngest clerk to do, to keep him out of further mischief. The whole plan is wrong as a restoration of the west end of the church; which needs, what the old builders, it appears, intended to supply, two towers extending north and south entirely beyond the line of the aisle walls. The nave is so protracted, westward, that the end seems almost to be lost in distance. The eye, in memory

at least—and memory is always acting as a most efficient element in architectural appreciation—does not retain a sense of limitation; and the long nave appears to be, without an obvious termination, undefined. The towers would give this mark of limitation; they would also make the west front half as wide and, on an average, half as high again, as in its present form; thus rendering it a suitable façade and frontispiece for so important and so large a building. The towers would also be distinctive features to associate with the larger tower at the cross; and thus would bring the structure into unity as a completed composition.

To Sir Edmund Beckett should be given all due credit for his generous care of the cathedral, for his wise suggestion of the high pitched roof, and for the structural improvements that he has directed; but the present scheme too painfully reminds us of the fact, that nature has its equitable limits for its gifts to individual men. A most successful advocate, a copious correspondent, and an accurate horologist, might well be satisfied that the constructive faculty is added to his numerous accomplishments, and might have left this western front to artisans, whenever they are found, who, though without a quarter of his general ability, should have creative power in intellectual and imaginative work in stone. Distinctly he has missed his way; his new design is utterly beneath the lowest criticism. But Sir Edmund backs his enterprise with an unlimited supply of funds; and as he is, moreover, hopelessly unconscious and artistically undiscerning, it is difficult to blame a man so zealous, and in such a painful case. Indeed the clerics in authority are the great culprits; they are trustees for the nation, and the sanction they have given to this ridiculous and yet presumptuous scheme is certainly a violation of their public trust. The three western doorways at St. Albans are unique and exquisite examples of progressive medieval art; worth, unrestored, far more than all the labour to be spent upon the west front of the church;

in fact a new west end, contrived expressly to enclose and so preserve them, would be the most judicious and appropriate completion of the building. To 'restore' these portals would be mutilation and destruction. Were the authorities at Bloomsbury to allow some wealthy connoisseur, entirely without a plastic artist's insight and ability—'an artist,' as Sir Edmund Beckett warns us, 'in his drawings only'—to inflict his incapacity upon the Elgin marbles, and 'restore' them, they would but equal the diocesan chancellor and the cathedral clergy at St. Albans in their stolid infidelity to a great artistic trust. Sir Edmund Beckett tells the world that his design is popular; but then we have just heard, on good professional authority, that 'the public actually prefer inferior architecture.' Sir Edmund, therefore, might judiciously beware.

There was at Doncaster some years ago a dignified and simple parish church, the work of master masons, built in an artistic way. This church has been destroyed; and in its place there is an architectural full-sized model, made to show what modern connoisseurs and architects consider an eclectic, sumptuous imitation of the style of medieval masonry; and manufactured with whatever finery might make a pretty building. In the sphere of art, according to Sir Edmund Beckett's valuable letter to the Institute, it is entirely without worth; but still it is a leading case in connoisseurship and professional design.

Let us now recapitulate. We learn from special advocates of the Profession, at the Royal Institute, that modern architects are 'not artists' in respect of their buildings, and that these buildings are for the most part 'sickly and lukewarm'; that 'five-sixths of those who enter the profession are worth 'nothing in the world'; that, notwithstanding, 'they are good 'enough' for anything the public want or give themselves the trouble to understand, and that consequently a national, artistic, architectural speech is utterly impossible, and criticism is absurd; that without capital no working man can be

divinely gifted, and from this it follows that the ‘Hope’ of English architecture is expressly ‘with the capital ;’ that our present architectural practice is injurious, and that drawing-masters have degraded architecture to a trade ; that though ‘an ‘immense number’ of our contemporary architects are ‘de-‘stroyers of architecture, and the disgrace of the age, the public ‘must yet take them as they are ;’ and that the late President, Sir Gilbert Scott, was in despair.

But besides all this, it is judiciously admitted that ‘to each ‘work an architect should *give his whole time and thoughts* ;’ that the old workman who did this built nothing bad, and most things excellent ; and that, although the state of science in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was comparatively low, these medieval master-builders, strikingly in contrast with our modern draughtsmen, always ‘show instinctive sentiment ‘and knowledge in their art ;’ and further that ‘The “Quarterly” ‘Reviewer has done something in directing attention to this ‘difference between the old workman and the modern archi-‘tect.’

These are the candid statements of the architectural Profession and their friends. We have the case against the present system perfectly established by its most conspicuous votaries ; who acknowledge that the undirected medieval master workman was the author of the works that all the world for centuries has rejoiced in. Why cannot we adopt the workman’s perfectly efficient system now ? The mere enquiry, after our protracted contemplation of a moribund profession, gives a sense of cheerfulness and life. We really have a hope, ‘not seen as yet,’ but perfectly substantial ; and the abolition of the drawing-master’s trade will be the pledge and earnest of a general architectural revival.

A recent article in ‘The Builder,’ criticising ‘The Profession of an Architect,’ supplies the latest evidence of the substantial concord between leading advocates of the profession and ‘The Quarterly’ Reviewer. Superficial readers

may discover in it only symptoms of hostility, but these are trivialities. Wherever truth is absolutely on one side, the adversary has, in equity, some license ; no one complains ; he must say something, and he commonly convicts himself, adding new volume to the overwhelming testimony that he seeks to controvert.

Our accurate quotation \* of the contrast that Sir Edward Watkin indicates between George Stephenson's good simple work for mere day wages, and the 'professional' charges of a modern engineer, appears to be a grievance. 'The special 'difference and expense attending the Metropolitan Railway it 'was of course convenient'—we have had this phrase before—'to leave out of sight,'—as if they could have been kept out of *mind*. But then Sir Edward Watkin wrote for ordinary people ; he has only failed to make the matter clear to the 'unintelligent' profession. Possibly Sir Edmund Beckett can inform 'The Builder,' or the Institute, by letter, how Sir Edward Watkin's shrewd comparison should be applied ; and he might use the Tay bridge as a convenient illustration of professional responsibility, and of its method, and success.

'The Builder' also takes exception to our solemn illustration of an 'architectural lamp-post.' † 'To pick out some 'apparently stupid thing, its surroundings not being referred to, 'that some architect has done, and represent it as the common 'practice of architects, is in plain English little better than 'lying.' The 'plain English' is beyond the scope of our remarks ; but, like previous quotations from 'The Builder,' it has all Sir Edmund Beckett's gracefulness of thought and style. However, if the writer in 'The Builder' had attended to Sir Edmund Beckett's teaching, he would have known that modern buildings, when designed by architects, are 'not artistic,' they 'certainly are not satisfactory,' and 'no one goes to 'see them.' All of them are consequently 'stupid things ; ' to 'pick out,' therefore, would be needless ; any random specimen

\* See 'British Quarterly Review,' April, 1880.

† Ibid.

will do to illustrate the ‘common practice of architects.’ As to the special lamp-post, we are told that ‘it is intended not ‘merely to carry a lamp but as a termination to a balustrade, ‘and anything that was not tolerably bulky would look ex-‘ceedingly weak.’ Our readers when they pass Trafalgar Square will recognize in the stone, monumental lamp-posts and the little coping wall, the approved professional proportion of a ‘termination to a balustrade.’



PROFESSIONAL LAMPS,  
FOR DAYLIGHT ONLY.

and so, as Mr. Beiresford Hope would say, he might be most ‘divinely gifted;’ yet his work is worse than nothing, a display of senseless ornament, intended to delight the tavern

We may however take another lamp design, from the great architectural gewgaw in the Euston road; a bunch of five large lamps set on the high projecting corner of a balustrade. This seeming galaxy is all a sham, and wholly useless, save as an expensive daylight show; not one of its five lamps is ever lighted. It is placed, indeed, exactly where no light can be required, and as far towards the moon as possible. Is it not ‘stupid,’ quite professional, and fit to match the lamp-posts in Trafalgar Square? Yet no one has objected to it; and the hotel design throughout is just as full of unperceived absurdity. But what could the poor drawing-master do? It was his ‘business;’ he had fifty other buildings to make sketches for. Sir Edmund Beckett says he was ‘the greatest of modern ‘Gothic architects,’ and here we have a specimen of his most conspicuous work. He evidently had abundant ‘capital,’

speculators and the ‘tasteful’ public. The poor parish lamp looks far more ‘satisfactory and respectable.’

‘One of the Reviewer’s main charges against modern architects is that they are paid much more than there is any reason ‘to suppose the medieval architects were paid ; and for this ‘cause he evidently regards the modern architect as a base and ‘grovelling personage.’ No ; the objection is that modern architects—the great majority of whom, as their late President has told us, are ‘worth nothing in the world,’ but are ‘destroyers of architecture and the disgrace of the age’—get any pay at all. Even the ‘lukewarm, sickly’ few receive immensely more than they are worth. The medieval master had fair pay for ‘wonderful’ artistic work ; the building work of modern drawing-masters, men ‘not alive to their profession,’ is entirely ‘inartistic,’ as Sir Edmund Beckett has so clearly shown. Yet for each inartistic building they receive a rate of payment far beyond what satisfied the medieval artist. And besides ‘The Builder’ does ‘admit, and with ‘regret, that there is not a little to be said in regard to the ‘practice, by architects who have attained reputation, of taking ‘more work than they can possibly give proper thought to, or ‘can even see to themselves at all, and having it done *en masse* by a number of subordinates.’ It is not merely, as is further said, that ‘there are small architects who do dirty ‘jobs,’ for all our architects are small ; but they are ‘architects ‘of reputation’ who are thus disreputable ; and what contractors say about ‘commissions’ taken, even claimed from them, by ‘architects of known respectability’ is very much in keeping with this ‘regrettable,’ but quite ‘admitted practice of architects who have attained reputation.’ Those who lead in the profession, and are ‘eminent,’ are thus, to use the diction of ‘The Builder,’ ‘in the unsatisfactory position of ‘a man who is *credited* with work which he cannot himself find ‘time to design or look after ; and is precluded from giving his ‘buildings that degree of thought which he ought to consider

‘as rightfully demanded from him.’ This acknowledged system of ‘unrighteousness,’ and ‘falsehood,’ and ‘dishonesty’—we collect the imputations of apologists for the Profession—is ‘compensated for’ by multiplied percentages ; and the system and its ‘compensation’ do together constitute success in the profession of an architect. Indeed, the architectural profession is entirely founded on the hope of prompt participation in this practice. Its result is, chiefly, that the quiet, able men, who might be artist-builders, real architects, are overlooked ; and that our buildings, public and domestic, are, as works of art, ‘worth nothing in the world.’ Impressed with this pernicious and ‘disgraceful’ state of things, ‘The Builder’ says: ‘The practice of architectural design by ‘proxy exists to far too large an extent ; and if the critic had ‘directed his shafts mainly against this he might have done ‘some good.’ And now we seek especially to satisfy this conscientious, humble-minded invitation.

‘The case of *Crossland v. Outhwaite*, tried at Kingston, ‘February 2, 1881, before Lord Coleridge and a special jury of ‘the county of Surrey, is of some public interest from the light ‘which it throws upon the charges made by professional archi-‘tects. The plaintiff in this case sought to recover from the ‘defendant a sum of about £300 in respect of plans and draw-‘ings made and work done by the former in his capacity of ‘architect for the latter. It appeared, however, in the course ‘of the trial, from the evidence of the plaintiff himself, that ‘the plans were prepared, not by that gentleman, nor even ‘under his personal supervision, but by another person, whose ‘name was attached to the drawings. The plaintiff, indeed, ‘endeavoured to explain this strange discrepancy by asserting ‘that the actual draughtsman of the plans was employed by ‘him as his clerk at an annual salary of £200, and that it was ‘by no means an uncommon thing for architects thus to avail ‘themselves of the services of other persons in the preparation ‘of plans, while considering themselves fully entitled to be

'paid as if they had devoted their own personal attention to 'the business. This theory, which Lord Coleridge designated 'as novel as it was dangerous, is not, let us hope, one 'which is frequently carried into practice. It would appear, 'indeed, from the evidence of the plaintiff, to have received 'some kind of sanction more or less formal from the In- 'stitute of British Architects. But, as was pointed out very 'forcibly by the learned judge, it is not competent for a number 'of gentlemen meeting together in Conduit Street to impose 'terms upon the British public which are totally at variance 'with elementary propositions of law. The jury, without 'requiring a summing up from his lordship, refused to adopt 'the extraordinary version of the duties of an architect pro- 'pounded by the plaintiff.' ('The Pall Mall Gazette.'

Then, referring to the taking of 'commissions,' 'The Builder' does not foolishly deny a well-known fact, but gently says: 'We have always failed in endeavours to obtain precise statements when such charges have been broadly made.' Most probably; and no doubt, before the late Commissions issued, all the representatives of Oxford, Macclesfield, and Gloucester, would have made a similarly relevant reply to a suggestion that their several constituencies were venal. But in the way of business, and the profession is 'a business,' a 'commission' is not held to be a bribe; the word is wholly different; and thus extremely pious persons, who are greatly shocked at bribery, will take and give 'commissions,' and resent the imputation of unrighteousness. Nor are the higher grades of what is called success at all times kept within the path of honour and of honesty. Inferior men in point of talent may be sea-green incorruptibles; and others, though accounted eminent, may be, in 'business,' quite unsound. Indeed to be a pluralist is something of a commendation at the Royal Institute of British Architects; and men get medals when they 'take more work than they can possibly give proper thought 'to, or can even attend to themselves at all.'

In January, 1877, 'The Times' published a copious and interesting correspondence on the subject of 'Commissions.' From this correspondence we will make a few condensed quotations, as they illustrate the practice of the architectural profession. First, Sir Edmund Beckett, with his usual ready testimony, writes: 'The best class of agents of all kinds, 'probably a small majority of the whole, repudiate the practice 'of taking commissions as dishonest and unjustifiable.' And 'A London Parson,' having 'had experience in church building, believes it is an undoubted fact that the architect not only 'gets his five per cent. commission from his employer, but also 'a commission from various tradesmen for every article of 'furniture, from an organ to a hassock; and may be from the 'builders also. Until architects are more honourable, their 'profession will always occupy a secondary rank, even if it be 'not regarded as among trades rather than professions.'

Then come four letters from the Institute. One 'Fellow,' with absurd omniscience, declares that he is 'sure no such 'practices are carried on by members of the Institute;' a cautious, inefficient limitation. Another 'Fellow' says that 'whatever some individuals may have done, such a practice 'would, according to the rules of the Institute, insure the 'expulsion of the offender.' There must be then 'a practice' among architects to which these 'rules' refer; and yet the third Fellow rebukes the 'London Parson' for stating 'his "belief" in the "undoubted fact" that architects do such 'things;' and further says that 'the Institute not only condemns such'—incredible—'conduct as it deserves, but would 'expel any member who practises it,' while the fourth Fellow, —the President,—declares that the *practice*—which 'according to the rules of the Institute insures expulsion—is 'absolutely unknown to architects as a body.' But why, if there are no transgressors, are the rules? Undoubted virtue needs no threatening law. There is suspicion even at the Institute.

The tradesmen then give evidence, distinctly, of the fact : ' As Builders and Contractors we may be allowed to know ' something of the matter. We do not allege our "belief," but ' we state our experience—and we are sure the building trade ' generally can bear out our statement—that the practice ' which the President of the Royal Institute of British Archi- ' tects repudiates not only exists, but is common ; and that ' architects are not above receiving commission on goods ' supplied for works executed under their direction. It is ' quite usual for architects to name in their bills of quantities ' and specifications certain firms by whom particular goods ' are to be supplied,\* or certain portions of the work per- ' formed ; and the firms so named allow a large "discount" ' on all orders so received. Perhaps some architects draw a ' distinction between "discounts" and "commissions."'

Again, Sir Edmund Beckett writes : ' I have no wish to ' depreciate the dignity of the Institute—to which perhaps a ' tenth of the British Architects belong—or its pre-eminence ' over other such societies which are not so Royal. But the ' practical question just now is, not their dignity but their ' power to prevent even their own members, and *a fortiori* ' architects generally, from doing that which they corporately ' denounce, but which the contractors, who are infinitely ' better witnesses, declare is common, and that all the build- ' ing trades will say so. After all that has been lately pub- ' lished, it is simply idle and ridiculous, if not something ' worse, for architects to go on publishing their rules against ' a practice which they know very well they can do nothing ' to prevent, and which those who suffer from it say is be- ' coming impossible to withstand, and is destroying all ' legitimate and moral business. They do not tell us of a ' single member they have even tried for it, much less of any

\* ' Town Traveller Wanted, by an old-established firm, to sell cement, plaster, &c., and to call upon architects.' ('The Times,' May 12, 1881.)

‘one they have expelled ; and if they did, what particular harm would it do him, or how much less would he demand his bribes afterwards ? They do not see too that any quantity of such negative evidence from “respectable” members of their own body proves nothing to the point. The only evidence worth having is from those who are forced to pay, not from those who say they do not receive.’

Can it be that this so ‘practical’ and well-informed Sir Edmund Beckett is the writer in ‘The Builder’ who has ‘always failed to obtain precise statements when such charges have been broadly made ?’ The correspondence ends with reiterated negations, ‘proving nothing to the point,’ from the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects ; and then ‘The Times’ ‘deplores the state of things.’

‘The Builder,’ in its article of June 12, 1880, says that ‘the charge of taking commissions from tradesmen, as generally made, is remarkable equally for impudence and ignorance.’ If our readers can find time to refer to this article and to the letter we have quoted from Sir Edmund Beckett, they will probably be led to the conclusion that in the two publications the writer is the same ; the versatile Sir Edmund merely

‘Shifting his side, as a lawyer knows how,’

when specially retained, and showing thus what credit should be given to professional denials.

These denials are in fact conclusive evidence of what has recently been said about the low morality and intellectual deficiency of the profession. An exception has however just appeared ; we welcome and record one instance of good sense and honourable feeling. Mr. John McLachlan, in his Presidential Address delivered at the meeting of the Edinburgh Architectural Association, on the 17th November, 1880, said : ‘It is within my own knowledge that there are men belonging to our profession who habitually undertake work for a

‘nominal fee to the client, but who make the same client pay ‘the amount of three or four fees by manipulating the items ‘in the schedules with the contractors in such a way as no ‘client can detect. The thing is scandalous and disgraceful. ‘The commission which appears in so many lawsuits as being ‘paid to architects is the surreptitious, underhand, disgrace- ‘ful bribe applied by manufacturers, patentees, and other ‘proprietors of building appliances, to have their goods ‘introduced into buildings. The leaven of this corruption ‘works in divers ways. Some men, calling themselves archi- ‘tects, have so arranged that large slices of emolument ‘should be hidden in the estimates, ultimately to pass into ‘the pocket of the architect. Such a form of wickedness is ‘conscious of its blackness, and so keeps out of sight. If ‘the architect will in plain words inform his employer that ‘on the £100 roof which he has just designed he has pocketed ‘£25 of commission, irrespective of his fee, I shall believe ‘he is acting as an honest man. Let us act as upright men, ‘and I venture to think that, in course of time, we shall take ‘a more honourable position in society.’

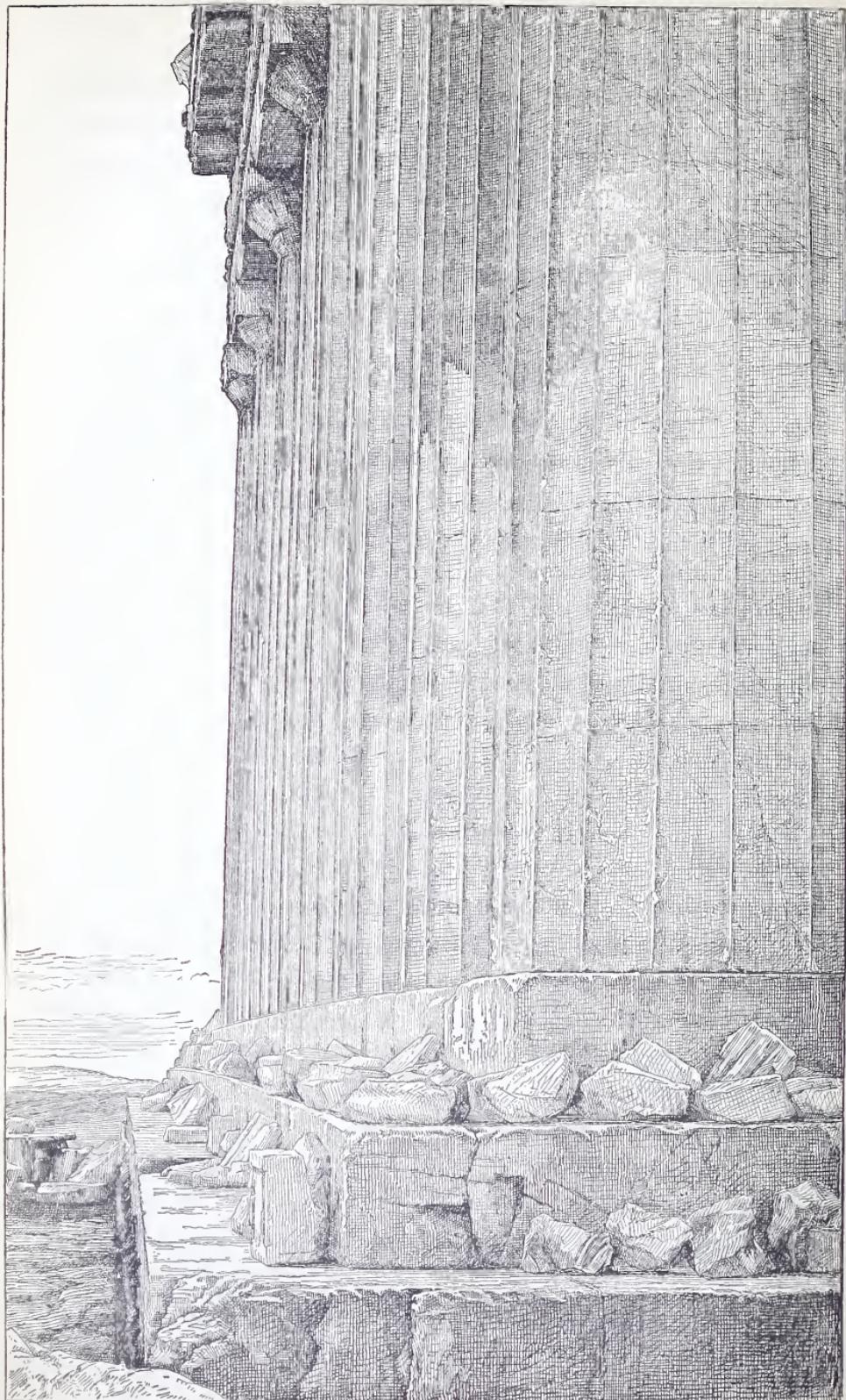
The reason why the drawing-masters can, as we have seen, by pluralism and percentages, obtain ‘whatever sums their ‘grasping natures prompt them to demand,’ is that the public are so ‘perfectly unfurnished with the knowledge of the sub-‘ject’—we continue with ‘The Builder’—that they are imposed upon; whereas the medieval public were habitually well instructed, and could so distinguish art from imitation that the latter had no chance. Art only was accepted; and becoming plentiful, and therefore cheap, the hideous waste of temporary, fashionable imitations was prevented. It is true that, as ‘The Builder’ says, the Poet Laureate receives a greater fortune from his works than Milton ever gained; but then he is a poet, and deserves the payment. Mr. Tennyson does not collect the English classics, and with paste and scissors make commercial ‘sketches’ for dramatic or idyllic poems as the

orders come, and leave them, in a way 'The Builder' deprecates, to be 'carried out in a semi-mechanical system by a number of clerks and pupils; becoming practically a mere 'man of business, and in filling his purse emptying a great 'deal of the dignity of his calling.' The book-making world has no pretentious class to be compared with modern architects. The public can read books, and do in time appreciate an author's worth or worthlessness: a few well-written pages quickly doom Montgomery's 'Satan'; but there is no homely comprehension of artistic work, to which an architectural critic may appeal. There is no architectural vernacular; the public are pretending to use Greek, Italian, Early English, Norman French, and half a dozen other architectural idioms, of which they know a little less than of their correlated literary languages; and then they grieve that there is no advance in architectural art. As reasonably look for 'Areo-pagitica' or 'Comus' from a Zulu or a Bengalee.

How hard it is to get broad principles of truth well lodged in narrow minds. We deprecate the evil influence of draughtsmanship, and thereupon 'The Builder' says that drawing is 'proscribed,' and that 'a mere stonemason is the Reviewer's 'notion of an architect.' Each statement is of course untrue. In our discussion drawing has been kept entirely distinct from trading draughtsmanship; the one is the occasional and subject help of architectural art; the other has become its treacherous and dominating substitute. It is quite possible to have a 'beautiful' design and yet a worthless building; while from rough sketches, such as Honecort's, coarse in execution, and apparently repulsive in design, a true poetic workman could produce a building full of exquisite originality and art. In due subordination, drawing may be useful to the workman; but, as Professor Ker, in his wise moment, said: 'In proportion to the skill in draughtsmanship, just in this 'proportion seems to be the loss of the solid qualities of good 'design; the details and the carving are mechanical and poor,

just as the draughtsmanship is elaborate and clever.\* This is all true, but nothing has been said to justify the notion formulated by 'The Builder,' and imputed to ourselves, 'that such a 'building as the Parthenon could have been produced without 'careful delineation and even calculation beforehand.' This absurd suggestion may commend itself to specially dull people; others will discern its fallacy and folly. There was, certainly, an outline drawing for the Parthenon, to give the general proportions and the common character of style; but all the special beauty of the building was emphatically masons' and carvers', and not draughtsmen's work. The drawing for the Parthenon design might easily be done in half a day, and at our usual scale for drawings none of the peculiar artistic merit of the building would be indicated. All the curves of mouldings, entasis, and stylobate, are purely building work; and were set out, full size, by the chief master workmen, with the grace and delicate refinement that the men of plastic art invent, and add to their mere graphic studies. They are at the building, and they see where form, beyond the draughtsman's lines, and various expressive modulation should be given. Modern architects do not create but only copy all these things, and so are only imitative draughtsmen; but by real artists they were all *worked out*; and workmen, and not drawing-masters, formed the subtle curves which give the Parthenon its architectural charm. The upward curvature of the plinth courses was detected at the building, not from any drawings, by the present scholarly surveyor of St. Paul's; and he has recently exhibited its value at the western front of the Cathedral. In our illustration of the Parthenon this curvature may be observed in the foreshortened view of the east stylobate; but, viewed in front,

\* Architecture is not the sole sufferer from excessive 'draughtsmanship.' 'Some day we shall learn the great truth, that pleadings'—by 'draughtsmen'—'are the curse of the law, but the blessing of lawyers; that is, all pleadings 'beyond the simplest statement of the real case' ('The Quarterly Review,' Jan. 1831.



ENTASIS, AND CURVATURE, PERFECTED BY WORKING MEN.

although this rise is *felt*, it is not obvious, nor easily perceived without artistically trained attention.

Architecture rises into art precisely as the sculpturesque controls and dominates the graphic element, and when the thoughtful lapicide and carver most completely rules and guides intelligent artificers and draughtsmen. At the Parthenon the carver Phidias ruled, and, like the Italian Maitani, this most 'famous workman' 'directed a body of architects and stone carvers.' Thus, it was to Phidias and other noble handcraftsmen, not to draughtsmanship, that the surpassing merits of the Parthenon are due. If it were otherwise, how is it that in our own day of drawing-masters, the 'superior class,' we have no buildings correspondingly superior to the Parthenon, or even to St. Stephen's Chapel, once at Westminster, or to the Abbey choir? Money without stint is wasted upon 'ornamental' buildings, graphic, wholly inartistic, and of merely transient and meretricious charm; perhaps if we again acknowledge the 'inferior class,' and, as at Westminster and Athens, let a working man direct our work, we might have buildings far less costly, and yet permanently beautiful.

No work of labour has so constant and beneficent an influence as building art upon the character and happiness of men. By nature, man is gifted in the noblest way with aptitude for building; all men, in whatever state, are born in some degree artistic, and they naturally show their rising mental power in thoughtful and imaginative building work. Each nation, from some local accident perhaps, has its peculiar form, or 'tongue,' by which the infinite variety of character in human nature is expressed in art; but all these languages of work, Egyptian, Greek, Byzantine, Norman, Arabic, and Gothic, not to mention less familiar forms of building, were vernacular, and 'understood of the people.' Thus they have produced expressive works of art, true monumental buildings, things to be preserved, developments of life, in which not manhood only but the Godhead is reflected. Through

predominating drawing-masters we have lost all this, and we have gained the Albert Monument, the Hyde Park trophy.

In our discussion, therefore, it is reassuring to perceive that we are very much at one with the late President of the Institute of Architects, Sir Gilbert Scott, who said: 'At all 'great periods of art, however different and even contrary 'may be the artistic sentiment expressed by the remains, the 'almost superhuman productions, of various ages, one fact is 'common to them all; the fact that they were all the works 'of men who, from the humblest to the most exalted, were 'devoted *heart and soul*, absolutely and unreservedly, to their 'art; and with whom personal advancement and social position 'were as dust in the balance when weighed against the perfection of the arts to which they had sworn allegiance. Until we 'can resuscitate among ourselves the same glorious enthusiasm, 'it is vain to look for another great period of architecture.'

But considering some recent efforts to resuscitate this 'glorious enthusiasm,' it was hard to find the late President continuing thus: 'Another promoter of the evils we deplore is 'the prevailing style of architectural criticism; for, much as our 'profession is held up to scorn, one rarely sees a word against 'the offal of our art, which is the great disgrace of our age. 'Nearly all which appears is against those who are enthusiastically aiming at a high standard of art. These are singled out 'for depreciation; yet this obviously has the effect of encouraging those who employ inefficient architects, and of making 'the public more satisfied with their own want of perception.'

The question, as thus stated by Sir Gilbert Scott, turns on the expressions 'work' and 'art.' What is the work of modern architects that so arouses their exceptional enthusiasm? Is it the same work that the old artist masons, none of whom were 'inefficient,' were engaged in '*heart and soul*, 'with no regard for social position or for personal advancement?' The late President informed us very candidly that 'we must look on architecture as a business,' and, in our time,

business is not understood to be conducted quite without an eye to social position and to personal advancement. In fact an architect is said to become 'eminent' as he advances his position, not in art, for he is 'not an artist,' but in society, which, as Sir Gilbert Scott declared, has not the slightest sense of art. The modern architect 'can be an artist only 'in his drawings,' but the old mason, as an artist, worked in stone, and not on paper; and so when the modern architect enthusiastically aims at a high standard, his ambition is entirely distinct from that of the old master masons. It really is by competition draughtsmanship, and not by building work, that he attains to his 'superiority.' He does no work, 'is not an artist in his buildings,' but by his well-prepared and cleverly selected stock of patterns he obtains from people who, as the late President himself declared, 'scarcely perceive the 'difference between good architecture and bad,' an undiscovered number of commissions, and the consequent 'advancement.'

Again, in the old workman his enthusiasm led to constant personal attention, and devotion *heart and soul*; but in the modern architect it stops at admiration. Thus in former times the 'master' lived at home, and with his work, a life of sympathy and dignified affection; but the modern architect deserts his own reputed art, and trades upon her degradation.

Possibly some architects are not at ease when this is pointed out. They strive professionally to obtain a seeming credit for their ill-conditioned art, and lavishly bedeck their buildings with expensive ornament, to make them fit for plutocratic good society. But by the test of real art such buildings have no character at all; and when Sir Gilbert Scott referred to 'architectural offal,' that which first occurs as worthy of the appellation is the recent meretricious decoration of cathedral choirs.

We consequently do not find that any modern architects are aiming at a 'high standard of work; ' none therefore, for such effort, have been 'singled out for depreciation.' We

have quoted those things that are prominent, and on this account alone: buildings are meant to be observed, and surely not in silence, nor without full liberty of judgment. Architects should never feel aggrieved when they are criticised; they would hardly wish to be neglected. Criticism, even trenchant and depreciating criticism, is a favour; and, by those who are aiming at a high standard, should at least be borne with equanimity. ‘It may be said that our system ‘has not failed; that our architecture is in a very satisfactory ‘state; that the recent criticisms are false, and that if the ‘public are dissatisfied with us, as we are told, it only shows ‘their ignorance and unreasonableness. I do not think it ‘would be wise for architects to rest content with such ‘assurance. It would not tend to restore the confidence of ‘the public in them; and indeed none of them believe it; ‘for though each may consider his own works excellent, he ‘thinks other new works faulty, and far inferior to old ones. ‘Architects should remember that, unlike painters and ‘authors, they have hitherto almost escaped public criticism. ‘Those who had the necessary knowledge felt they could not ‘with propriety criticise unfavourably the work of professional ‘rivals; and amateur criticism was generally valueless from ‘ignorance. A great deal of the architecture produced is, it must ‘be confessed, very bad.’ (*‘House Architecture.’* By J. J. Stevenson, Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.)

For these gentlemen, so grievously neglected by the critics, there should be all fair consideration in their graphic work; but they perversely fail to comprehend and to accept the workman’s sovereignty in building art. They talk of ‘common ‘workmen’ as if these alone were found incapable; but we have common architects, and if their own opinion, and the judgment of the public, on the architectural profession and their works may be accepted, they also are but very slightly valued. Though it is quite true that, as an architectural system, the Profession is ‘held up to scorn,’ this would be but

a futile undertaking if their buildings were artistic. Members of the Institute should bear in mind the teaching of their friendly connoisseur, that they are never artists in respect of what they are supposed to build, but only in respect of drawings. Even architects can hardly be enthusiastic about these. The late Sir Gilbert Scott's delusions—self-delusions—about architectural enthusiasm, must have raised a smile in many a serving draughtsman's face, when he remembered how *he* made the drawings which an 'architect of eminence' had used to gain professional success.

In criticising works by the Profession we endeavour to ignore the individual architect; but such abstraction is impossible when verbal utterances are referred to. The late President, Sir Gilbert Scott, who is in reminiscence specially before us, was a man of eminence both as an architectural grammarian and as a man of business; but, besides, he was distinguished from his nearest rivals by his freedom from their High Church sentiment, or affectation. A particularly 'canting' style of church work has become the demonstration of a class of sacerdotalists among the clergy, who contrive to captivate poor silly women, and still sillier men, by tales about their 'sacraments' and 'orders.' In their churches, by an absurd inversion, the officiating minister is dominant; and, in each circumstance and act of outward worship, men and women show that they have given their intellects into the keeping of the Church, and so, apparently, have lost them. The associations of this school of priestly draughtsmanship are very deleterious to architects, who frequently become small-minded, intellectual dwarfs, unable to look over the enclosure of their petty schism.

The late President had always kept himself above this class of men; though in his way ecclesiastical, he was not subjectively clerical. But possibly instead of this, for all men have their trials, he suffered greatly from the plague of pluralism; which, as we have seen, has now become the bane of English

architecture. To this cause it may be due that, notwithstanding all his increased knowledge and experience, his later buildings were decidedly inferior to some that he erected nearly forty years ago. The church at Camberwell, as a design, is very much above the college chapels at St. John's and Exeter. His buildings are, however, but scholastic forms, with little of the incident, and nothing of the touch, which indicate the vivifying spirit. Thus they do not live; they have no future, and they cannot be, to just anticipation and discriminating foresight, dignified or venerable.

This, Sir Gilbert Scott had no doubt come to feel; it was a sad experience, after forty years of arduous work, to find that all was without hope. No feeling is more painful than despair, and so we warn the younger members of the Institute, that they may save themselves from ultimate despondency. Their late President was, as he assured them, quite enthusiastic about art; and yet his buildings never were, artistically, a success; although the medieval masters, also with enthusiasm, did so well. Here are resemblances in condition, with decided contrasts in result; there then remain the separate methods to consider, and in these the student may be able to discover where, and how, the modern draughtsman fails. The essential want is, evidently, self-abnegation. The old masons were devoted *to* their work; with modern architects the opposite occurs, their work is made a means *for* them. The medieval masters were not pluralists, but always resident upon their work, to *do* it, not design it only. In the Church the working clergy have been freed from pluralism, and are now upon the footing of the medieval masons; cannot our architects of eminence begin a similar reform? Might they not now, without delay, adopt the method of these constantly successful men; and each, with perfectly well-founded hope, '*devote himself heart and soul*,' of course with fitting wages, *to one work*? For the commissions they may thus abandon or decline they need have no solicitude; each work can be

entrusted to the care of one of the 'young men,' or their successors, whom the late President assured us 'he could name, of the highest promise, and who were actually languishing for architectural employment.'

All the world however is not perfect; motives are mixed, and help is necessary even for the virtuous. A gold medal, given by Her Majesty, is on occasion offered by the Institute to some reputed architect or connoisseur. The effect, it seems, is nugatory; when the medal is declined no harm is done, and when it is accepted no great benefit to any one appears to have resulted. If another principle of distribution were adopted, and the medal were presented to the architect who had *declined* the greatest number of commissions, good might come of it. We venture to commend this new suggestion to the Fellows and Professors at the Institute. Most men are anxious for distinction; here might be an opportunity and hope for some; the competition would not probably be too severe.

What we have said in this discussion has not been induced by an unfriendly or antagonistic spirit, as appears to be supposed; but, on the contrary, by our especial care and sympathy for art, and our compassion for the architects, who spend their lives in practising the 'Imitative Styles.' They know too well how hollow all the eminence of the Profession is; how vain the pedantry of clerics and of connoisseurs; and how absurd the aspirations, 'so artistic,' of the 'cultivated public.' These things contemplated daily, without hope, must be a constant misery to those of the Profession who have minds above their 'business;' and our great desire has been to see these gentlemen relieved, in hope at least, from such unblest, ridiculous associations. True, we are wholly unacquainted with the members of the Institute; but this obscurity affords us special freedom in the scope and sentiment of our remarks, and gives no opportunity for any seeming interruption of our general benevolence. Our criticism is reserved for architectural works, but sometimes, when apparently invited, it

regards, with scrupulous amenity, the utterances of authoritative public names. These names we often recognise with much respect and thankfulness ; to these contemporary architects, and *dilettanti*, we are very much indebted for the energy with which they have promoted the Profession, and have thus so amply solved the question of its value as a method and a means of art ; they have done all that is, professionally, possible in their attempts at art ; we cannot hope that anything more scholarly will be achieved. But, having thus beheld the climax of professional potentiality, we find ourselves 'unsatisfied ;' and, like the little angels on the Albert Monument, are only straining upward in a very futile way. Had we not better start again from solid ground, and seek some other course to the artistic empyrean ?

Our pluralist Profession is indeed played out ; it has entirely performed whatever it may call its 'work,' and now it stands before the world artistically impotent and in despair. It cannot possibly advance in an artistic way ; but, for a show of movement, it has learned to practise something like an architectural goose step ; first one foot and then another is brought forward, and we have alternate demonstrations of the various styles, Gothic or classic, each, as Professor Ker assured us, 'in its turn.' Can this absurdity continue ? Is it not sufficient that three generations of young men have, in our time, been brought to a ridiculous and 'languishing' condition ? May it not be something other than 'a fierce 'spirit of hatred' that induces us to tell the devotees of the Profession, many of them young and full of eager expectation, what a mean and disappointing course of life they have before them ; and that causes us so perseveringly to point these wanderers to the only way that leads to architectural success ? A way which, if they diligently follow it, will be in truth a life of happiness and freedom, and of self-respect and reasonable hope.

THE ETHICS  
OF  
URBAN LEASEHOLDS.

BY  
JOHN T. EMMETT.

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“ MY AIM IS TO BRING THE MATTER INTO MORE PUBLIC DISCUSSION :  
LET THE SAGACITY OF OTHERS WORK UPON IT.”—*EDMUND BURKE.*

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NINTH THOUSAND.

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LONDON :  
HODDER AND STOUGHTON,  
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

*Men allow us to proceed, while we confine ourselves to general truths, until they see that they themselves are implicated in them, and have to act upon them ; and then they suddenly come to a stand ; they collect themselves and draw back, and say they do not see this—or do not admit that ; and they look about for excuses, and they say that we carry things too far, and that we are extravagant, and that we ought to limit and modify what we say, that we do not take into account times, and seasons, and the like. This is what they pretend ; and well has it been said, ‘ Where there is a will there is a way ;’ for there is no truth, however overpoweringly clear, but men may escape from it by shutting their eyes ; there is no duty, however urgent, but they may find ten thousand good reasons against it in their own case. And they are sure to say we carry things too far, when we carry them home to themselves.—*

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

## URBAN LEASEHOLDS.

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LEASEHOLDS are eviscerated freeholds stuffed with law; a process first contrived when legal subtlety was perfectly matured, but social science and political economy were yet unknown. Property in land was then a *corpus vile* for the lawyers, who regarded it as a peculiar subject for their cleverest devices. Its superior productive capabilities were little cared for; agriculture made no cognizable progress, though no method for encumbering the land with trammels and complexities of law was, seemingly, neglected. The result appears in almost every acre of the soil, in almost every building on the land; but the bad influence of leasehold tenure is most evident in metropolitan and urban buildings, and on those who are in any way connected with them, whether freeholders of building land and their lessees, or builders, tenants, occupiers, we may even add beholders of our modern leasehold houses.

The freeholder, for whose behoof the system was invented, has a claim for special pity. He may possibly have been a blissful, unsophisticated, pastoral proprietor, when, in an evil hour, his men of business tell him that his quiet fields have been developed into building land; and then his misery begins. He seems to see before him the potentiality of wealth without exertion: he is called, by reason of this building land, a man of property; and hearing, and of course believing

this, he far too often calculates his expectations as realities, and so begins to live, apart from fact, in dreamy hope. Thus his individuality and manliness are lost—sunk in the land. Afflicted with possession on the brain he loses self-possession, and his neighbours say that he 'belongs to the estate,' which is indeed a true account of his condition. Moreover, in a year or two the monetary gain, whatever it may be in prospect, is in thought discounted, and there remains mere eagerness for prompt acquirement. The man in fact is badly off, for he has lost contentment.

Meanwhile the lawyers and the 'architects' are realizing what the man of property can only make his hope; they plan and litigate, as leaseholds need, and get their costs. The sewers and roads are also made at a large outlay, bringing no immediate return, but yielding a commission to the 'architect,' and then the property is quiet for some years.

At length a plot of land is let to a smart, enterprising builder, highly recommended by his timber merchant; and to induce the builder to proceed 'with spirit,' and secure the ground-rents, liberal cash advances from the fortunate proprietor are suggested, and eventually made. The 'architect' will certify the cost of building work to warrant each advance, and the solicitor will take the builder's equitable security and his receipt; the fees remaining with the 'architect' and lawyer as before. The freeholder once more is good for all, but gets no gain.

The work however does proceed with spirit. Possibly a dozen 'carcasses' are soon in a condition for the first advance; and so they rapidly proceed till all are covered in. And then the builder, having gained his stipulated cash advance upon the maximum of rough material, to be paid for when his three months' bills are honoured, and on the minimum of costly labour which he has to pay for promptly in days' wages, can with cheerfulness look round him; and, his friendly timber merchant being paid, he offers, and a liberal

offer too, his general creditors five shillings in the pound. The creditors, who know their business, acquiesce; and, pocketing their dividend, are quite prepared to trade with the same enterprising builder on some other 'freehold property' where 'cash advances will be made.'

The secret of their confidence is this, that builders' tradesmen carefully insure themselves against such 'accidental' losses by extravagant excess of prices; and these heaped up prices do, to some extent, affect the entire building trade. Of course, then, the great public pays, but is 'too occupied with business' to consider. In one trade there is a discount or commission of from thirty-three to forty-eight per cent.\* beyond the ordinary business profit, and the other trades are liberal in a corresponding way.

When on a Tuesday morning news arrives from the estate that all the work is stopped—for speculating builders are most careful to obtain advances for the payment of their men on Saturday—the 'architect' is naturally sorry; more particularly if, on very careful scrutiny, the carcasses appear to be in every way defective, thoroughly ill-built, requiring much upholding, and, perhaps, not worth the cost of the material. The freeholder is philosophical, or foolish, as the fates permit; his ground rents are still unsecured, and his advances have resulted in a pile of hideous brickwork, an advertisement of evil on his property. The lawyer and the 'architect' explain the nature of the case, and the result is that the carcasses are sold for what they may be worth, and our proprietor goes softly for his time of mourning. He has realized the loss that, in conjunction with the profit which his men of business tell him must soon come, is held to constitute a sound and healthy character of business, as distinct from mere reception and acquirement.

\* We might quote a trade in which the discount is full fifty per cent. In bankruptcies the tradesman thus can take ten shillings in the pound and yet secure a profit.

After a year or two of patience and consideration land is let again, at probably a great reduction on the former rental, for the carcasses have brought some disrepute upon the land. The freeholder, refusing to 'advance,' discovers that his property is worth no more than half of what he previously had been instructed to expect; and so he wisely learns to limit all his reckonings to what he has in hand. Meanwhile, if settlements and possible encumbrances weigh heavily upon the man of property, the ground-rents are sold off as fast as they are made; and so eventually, after years of trouble and anxiety and risk, the end of all may be that he is not insolvent, and is very thankful that his means, apart from his 'estate,' have saved him. If he has been cautious, free from spendthrift habits, and a man of sense, he may avoid extreme disaster, but in most cases ultimate success is slow, and very moderate.

Of course, the public are not in the counsel of these men of property; and, in their magnifying way, they take the gross for something like the net return of building land. But if the histories and titles of suburban property in ground rents were investigated, it would soon appear that the reputed rapid increment of wealth to the original proprietor is a delusion, and that an 'estate' is often but a cumbrous and expensive means of wasting life and intellect for a vain show; that had the freeholder disposed of all his land, with prudent temporary building covenants, in lots as buildings were required, and then invested the proceeds in interest-paying, sound securities, his fortune would have been much greater, his encumbrances much less, time, health, and possibly some credit, would have happily been saved, and years of disappointment, care, and foolish expectation would have been avoided.

This is a fair account of many an enterprising freeholder's experience. In other cases speculating men of business take the land, with all its risks and care, at a low ground-rent; and by sub-letting to the builders make in time what are most

infelicitously called 'improved' ground-rents. 'Architects' and lawyers are employed to let the land, and to invite their clients to 'advance to builders' at 'good interest.' This goes on, possibly, for years, with good or evil fortune for the speculator; but the builder's usual course is one of ill-considered enterprise, extravagant expenditure, anticipated profits, and frequent 'compromise' or bankruptcy; and for the tradesmen there are heavy risks, completely, or it may be incompletely, covered by insurance prices. 'Architects' and lawyers get, of course, their fees; and the confiding client-mortgagee receives, for a few years perhaps, his interest, and then possession of a range of showy-looking houses made of half-baked clay, and mud, and compo, with raw shrinking timber, gaping joiner's work, foul chimneys, unsound roofs, damp basement rooms, and inefficient drains. The public thus are providently housed.

It must be evident, however, that the method is expensive. The extent of land round London needlessly withdrawn from agriculture, though for years unused for building; the long lines, and even widespread neighbourhoods of carcasses that stand unfinished, and of houses equally unlet, mean grievous loss and waste, which some one has to suffer. Certainly, the builders cannot be the losers; and, in brief, the public pays. When to this dead loss are added all the multiplied and heavy untaxed costs of 'architects' and lawyers, the insurance profit, twenty-five per cent. or even thirty, for the tradesmen, and the constant outlay that the rickety and unsound work requires, it must be clear that leasehold house providing is a most extravagant and wasteful system, which, when they learn to understand it, men of sense will not endure.

Besides all this excessive costliness, the houses are themselves a constant tax on physical endurance, and on social comfort and economy. The freeholder's estate is planned with no regard at all for those who will, by force of leasehold custom, be compelled to suffer in the houses. 'Architects' lay out the roads and streets with reference to frontages alone,

and on the length of frontage so contrived the extremest subdivision possible for sites of houses, to obtain the greatest rental from the land, is made. The houses are to be the narrowest that the public will, in each locality, endure; and certainly the public are extremely squeezable. The consequences are small incommodious chambers, well called 'sitting' rooms, in which the necessary or unnecessary furniture so occupies the little space that those for whom they are supposed to be constructed ought to be incapable of movement, basement kitchens, dog-leg staircases (most aptly named), few rooms to live in on a floor and many floors of height, the thinnest walls the Building Act permits, abundance of cheap 'decoration,' a fine coat of stucco, with the 'architectural effect' of cornices and columns to distract attention from the meanness of the work, and such a want of liberal adaptation and amenity as quite forbids the sense of comfort, and prevents the house from ever being honoured or rejoiced in as a home.

The ordinary term for building leases is from eighty to a hundred years. Renewals, or new leases on a rack house rent, are generally granted for from twenty-one to forty years. These terms becoming always shorter by the lapse of time, the average present length of London leases is not more than thirty years. Of course then a shrewd leaseholder restricts his outlay on improvements and repairs; and probably at length from sheer disgust he sells his houses to some speculator in bad leasehold remanets. They are then treated as mere rent producers, to be crammed with lodger-tenants, and be utterly used up; and in such tenements one half of what are called the floating population live.

The long continuance and the general extension of the leasehold system are an evidence of the habitual neglect of men to study questions which, in some sense public, yet most intimately concern themselves. In this case failure to perceive the obvious connection between a harmless-looking legal document and its widespread damaging effect, becomes the

cause of constant suffering and error. Freeholders, for instance, never seem to understand their actual position, but unlearnedly imagine that as they hold their land in fee they have control of that which other people, builders, place upon it; that when they let their freehold land for building they obtain a freehold price by way of rental, and that the reversion, after ninety years or so, is worth consideration and of present value. These all are fallacies: the freeholder's control is very superficial, and his ground-rents, even on the large estates in Westminster and Bloomsbury, are an economic error, a financial waste. A simple process of arithmetic will show that if a man of statutable age grants building leases for the usual term the reversion of the buildings cannot be, within an ordinary lifetime, of appreciable worth. It is moreover evident that a clear title, with no covenants and no superior control, must be more valuable than a lease containing cumbrous stipulations, with the possibility of legal complications, unanticipated loss or even forfeiture. The depreciated worth of leasehold property compared with freehold is the measure of this difference; and yet the freeholder will hardly bring himself to admit and understand that what he calls a freehold ground-rent is but leasehold in its value; that the freehold which he let became by action of the lease depreciated to mere leasehold in the rent that it commands; and that for this lessened worth of his commodity he has the fiction of an ultimate reversion, which even to his heirs, when two-thirds of the term has lapsed, will hardly be of any value. He has deprived himself for sixty years at least of something like a quarter of the value of his property. He had a good commodity to sell, spontaneously he made it bad, and he is then obliged to let it at a corresponding under-price; and all for an ideal gain so far remote that a mere peppercorn insurance could suffice to represent it. His financial loss is thus immediate and absolute; but besides this loss, he has for the remainder of his life the care of supervision, of collecting

rents, of law contingencies, of architectural dilapidations, of insurance policies, and of the many incidents that happen, unforeseen, to property secured on leasehold houses. His 'estate,' instead of being a relief from care, is quite a business; he must then entrust it to a lawyer's keeping, and with equanimity receive and pay the annual bill.

All this is new to many lessors and lessees. To make the matter plain, suppose a freeholder has two adjoining plots of land, equal in size and value. One plot is his own in fee, at his complete disposal; but the other is in trust, and can be only let on building leases. On this second plot ten houses, worth six thousand pounds, are built, the ground rent being ninety pounds a year for ninety years. The former plot, worth also ninety pounds a year, is sold, at twenty-five years' purchase, a fair customary valuation, for two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds (£2,250). The interest, at five per cent., on this amount is one hundred and twelve pounds ten shillings (£112 10s.), which is one quarter, twenty-two pounds ten shillings (£22 10s.), more than the ground-rent of the corresponding leasehold plot. This latter sum gives therefore the decrease of value that the lease has caused. Allowing that from wear and tear and change of fashion the ten houses will in ninety years depreciate so little as one-sixth, the freeholder's reversion at that distant date will possibly be worth five thousand pounds. Putting then aside the equal ninety pounds per annum in each case, the two transactions are represented to the freeholder in one plot by the twenty-two pounds ten per annum increased income, and in the other by the long deferred reversion, which the compound interest tables say is worth, in theory, some twenty-two weeks' rent, but which, in fact, for sixty years to come has no commercial value. It is 'dormant,' but the annual twenty-two pounds ten are 'active,' and of present and continual value; and if this excess of income and its interest be constantly invested in good five per

cent. securities, they will in ninety years amount to six and thirty thousand pounds (£36,000), seven times the value of the so much-prized house property reversion. Or if all the current income were employed judiciously in trade at only ten per cent. net profit on mere annual returns, the 'reversion' would amount to upwards of a million (£1,195,200). The freeholders' reversion, then, is very dear ; the man who sells his freehold is the wise financier, and trusts prohibiting a sale are hindrances to wealth.

But when two-thirds, or thereabouts, of ninety years has passed, and the slow, gradual increment of fortune comes, how seldom and how little do the owners find themselves the better for their long-expected good. In almost every case the property has been negotiated or encumbered, turned to some account by way of fines or premiums or mortgages or any of the methods that the law provides for eating up the land. Besides, after some ninety years or more of use and of exposure houses will show age and wear. They were not built to last beyond the term, nor yet designed for comfortable human occupation ; but, for the most part, they were planned to suit the fashion and the folly of the day. The fashions having changed, the houses lose their character for style ; they are old-fashioned, and are accounted quite inferior ; whole neighbourhoods become neglected and forsaken by the well-to-do, and, notwithstanding lawyers and surveyors, sink into a hopeless state of squalour and dilapidation ; they are then called 'rookeries.' Thus in every period of its course, in its preparation and its consequences, leasehold tenure is a noxious system, and the transmutation of the freehold is in every way an injury to the proprietor.

But building speculators are, like leasing freeholders, the victims and results, if they are also agents, of the leasehold system. These poor men are seldom destitute of merit ; they are probably indifferent workmen, who, by force of character and exceptional capacity for supervision and control, have

been advanced in their own sphere to some position of command. They are invited to become leaseholders; and, stepping confidently and with eagerness into the stream of speculation, frequently from sheer inexperience and before they are aware, they lose their footing and are carried downward by the stream, perhaps just floating for a while, but almost sure to be at length submerged. The process has a hardening effect, and many a London speculator has, not merely once or twice, compounded with his creditors. The bankruptcies and 'compromises' by one generation of the speculating builders about London were, it has been said, more numerous than the men themselves. We seldom hear of speculating builders who have been remarkably successful, but occasionally, after lives of care and scampish work, they make, perhaps by some mere accident, what they esteem a fortune; or more probably they sink in middle age, exhausted, out of sight below the lowest level even of a leasehold tenure. Would that their works might follow them!

Of course, considering the ill repute and risks of speculating leasehold work, few prudent men of capital will seriously engage in it. The enterprise is therefore almost wholly left to needy men, who, as they build, immediately charge the carcases with mortgages and loans, involving costly and unnecessary deeds. Thus it occurs that speculating builders are so grievously oppressed by law. Besides, in modern leases there is now a customary clause requiring that all demises, under-leases, and assignments, which include the mortgages and charges, shall be registered and copied by the freeholder's solicitor, who is to receive on each occasion some two guineas as his fee; and, as new houses frequently remain for twenty years or more negotiable and encumbered ere they settle down into the hands of individual proprietors, the fortunate solicitor may, by the fees and costs on a suburban leasehold, make for years an income greater than the freeholder's gross rental.

With the speculating builders should be classed their wan-

dering workmen, artisans and labour sub-contractors of the lowest kind in character and quality of work ; 'field rangers' they are called. Not one quarter of the working builders about London are efficient 'tradesmen,' worth their wages ; almost all are spoiled, or have been grievously arrested in development by sub-contracting and the present architectural and leasehold systems. These poor men accept from their employers the discovered measure of the 'public taste' and need, and do their work appropriately. Speculating builders will provide such workmanship as they can get ; but they can hardly care to do good work for people who habitually show that this is not the thing they want, and that it is, in fact, beyond their understanding and appreciation.

Here then we have a second numerous and wide-spread class perverted and used up by this pernicious system. When the public execrate their painful leasehold houses their chief outcry is against the speculating builders ; but these builders are not half as much to blame as their accusers, who, without these men, it seems, would have no houses to complain of. Speculating builders are but a result of public folly ; as a class they are not culpably successful at the public cost, nor are they so beholden to mankind that they should sacrifice themselves to architectural philanthropy. Their object, quite legitimate according to the public will, is to contrive as many houses as they can within a given frontage, then to make these houses stand awhile, and then, with careful promptitude, to sell them. The superior public, who are taught to think that architecture 'as a fine art' is the only fitting subject for their contemplation, and that cordial acquaintance with the simple art of building and with building artisans is 'low,' when they experience the result of their absurd neglect are disappointed, injured, irritated, and in their dismay they blame the speculating builders, who are only instruments ; they never seem to recognize the real cause of their affliction.

Now let the truth be known : with all the great defects of

modern houses and the multiplied delinquencies of builders, these men will, in all things that concern the domicile, bear fair comparison with the occupants themselves, who are absurdly ignorant of everything connected with the scene of their domestic life. The thing that, more than any other, must affect their comfort and their health they never understand ; they trouble all the world with their complaints, instead of thoughtfully considering why they suffer and determining to get complete and permanent relief.

And yet the public also may be well excused. The leasehold custom has been no invention of the present generation ; they were all born to it, and are constantly debilitated by its influence. Leaseholds have denied them some of the most grateful sentiments and fortifying circumstances of domestic life. To occupy a freehold house confers upon its owner a peculiar sense of freedom, clears his mind of vanities, and gives him, consequently, force of understanding : it induces firmness and stability of character, and sets around a man a healthy limit to his aims, if he is wise enough to recognize it. He has naturally an habitual, sympathetic interest in his house which makes it his delightful care ; and by this sympathy, a noble and expanded selfishness, he rises to be home and house-proud, and in habit self-respecting. ' Nothing contributes more to nourish elevation of sentiment in a people than the large and free character of their habitations. The Middle Age architecture and its spacious and lofty rooms, so unlike the mean and cramped externals of English middle-class life, gave the sentiment of a larger and freer existence, and were a sort of poetic cultivation ' (John Stuart Mill).

Such was the character of life on freehold tenure ; but of late, on leaseholds, men are never free in sentiment or elevated or enlarged at home. Their ' mean ' houses are a gathering of torture chambers, and they enter them with the habitual instinctive expectation of removing at the earliest opportunity.

‘ Bees, by the instinct of nature, do love their hives, and birds their nests ; ’ but men can have, by nature, no instinctive love for leasehold houses. Every house appears indeed a thing to be avoided, and each tenant feels that what he calls his house is not a home, but something made for ‘ style ; ’ it was not made for him, nor can it be : he is unsettled, apprehensive, constantly expectant, never satisfied. The consequence has been that every year there is increased mobility among the London population, whose full average length of residence in one house is not three years ; and this, in houses of the middle class, is now the ordinary length of term for occupants’ agreements. Houses are got up to look, to superficial eyes, superior to their rental ; showing that a studiously constructed falsehood is considered an advantage. A similar pretentiousness is carefully maintained in equipage and furniture, that everything may be in keeping ; and the tenant thus asserts his vain position in the world. Speculating builders see all this, they learn to know their public, and are quite prepared to please them. They discover that their customers are seldom satisfied with a substantial and convenient, unpretending house, in which the income of the occupant might with propriety be economized, and his display would be within his actual means. The builders understand that the reverse of this is the ambition of the world ; and that if some men have the gift of self-respect above the customary reverence for wealth, this class is not the one on which they must rely. They consequently build their houses for the public as they find them, and these houses are, in architectural character and show, fair representatives of popular desire.

Thus the system is continually acting and reacting on the public and on the houses they inhabit. It induces flimsy-mindedness ; men fatuously accept the evil which by leasehold tenure they are made to suffer, and their domiciles reflect the weakness and the want of individuality of those who occupy them. The result is perfectly well known. Though

it is said that one half of the world can hardly know how the remainder live, a long experience in London does enable some to form a tolerable estimate of the condition of its sad and quiet-looking people. Certainly a large proportion live from hand to mouth, and very frequently beyond their means. Commencing with a perfectly 'genteel' idea of themselves and of their suitable requirements, they wear their spurious gentility, a robe of Nessus, all their lives. It is the 'elegant' and showy leasehold house that starts them on their lifelong painful and unfortunate career.

Under such circumstances some device of false economy is needful to maintain appearances; and cleanliness and comfort, children's education, even health, are sacrificed. The house, so stylish, and not built for common people of domestic habits, needs much cleaning and attendance; but these things can be dispensed with. Every year there is a greater general neglect of household decency. Tenants live, for their three years perhaps, in constantly accumulating dirt, and then they take another house, fresh cleaned and painted, where again they stay till filth and its results compel another move. We are informing those who do *not* know the state in which the other half of London live. The house, they say, is kept in order for them; and repairs of damage done by ill-conditioned occupants are now by custom made 'the landlord's business'; everything must be provided for the tenant, who in house affairs is treated as entirely helpless and incapable, at once a baby and an imbecile.

This coddling has a very bad effect upon the personal and domestic habits and the social sentiment of men and women. When so overcared for, people are induced to care but little for themselves. The 'husbands' are above, or possibly beneath, the manly household duty of inspecting plumbers' work and drains; the 'housewives' also, occupied with elegancies, find efficient household work and care unsuitable; and fevers, typhoid, and diphtheria are allowed to decimate

their families. Besides, the house in sanitary matters is not separate from the furniture that it contains, nor this again from clothing and the family that wear it. Thus the danger cannot be restricted to the architectural structure of the house: it pervades everything; and when reports of fever epidemics and of *variola* cause alarm, it will be well to notice how these virulent disorders are engendered and promoted.

But there are more than architectural and sanitary matters influenced by this tenure: intellectual growth and mental character become injuriously affected. People will employ their minds on their immediate surroundings, if not wisely, owing to obstructing circumstances, then absurdly, with the natural results. Under leasehold tenure men and women being guarded from responsibility—deprived of it would be more accurate—concerning the most influential object that affects them, have no worthy interest in the fabric of their house; their attention, therefore, is transferred to the light cares of furniture and dress. The consequence of this entire withdrawal of the dignified and permanent abode from social and domestic care is an unnatural levity, which demonstrates itself in ‘fashions’ and their imitations. Everything in outward life becomes a triviality, and character receives its stamp from trivial surroundings. Self-respect is thus diminished, and social reverence is lost. The result throughout society has been the ostracism of the stronger minds and the promotion of the weak and vain. Excessive worthlessness of every kind in dress and furniture is evidence of this inversion; and the public, having lost their natural leaders and their individual judgment and good sense, make tradesmen’s novelties in ‘fashionable’ rubbish matter for intense desire, extravagant expenditure, and lifelong social competition.

On the other hand, the uncontrolled possession of his free-hold residence endows the self-respecting man with social dignity. He is a local personage, perhaps a power, having local interests which lead to local public duties. When thus

territorially settled, men know one another, and discover who should lead in secular affairs and who should follow; special aptitude for work and for administration becomes recognized and properly applied; and as each house erected by its own proprietor upon a freehold site is pretty sure to be a sound, substantial structure, the result of constant effort at improvement, such endeavour and experience naturally give the architectural culture needful for the proper management of public works. With such homely, customary house-building there would be no abject deference of ignorance to clever experts; people generally would understand whatever might be recommended for the public good, and would themselves see clearly how it is to be obtained.

But some may say that business is so urgent, and its regular engagements so engross their time, that they have none to spare for architectural diversion. True enough, no doubt, particularly when these persons are successful, and are rising in the world. But what is business that it should be so engrossing? What need is there for the constant urgency? As business men report, their occupation is not so entirely healthy that no change and no relief could be desired. They say—we quote from varied and extensive testimony—that the trades and even the professions are but few in which a scrupulous regard is shown for genuine, as distinct from legal honesty. It really seems then that some little intermission might be advocated, and accepted by the saner portion of the world. A wholesome change of occupation might improve the moral tone, and possibly revive the spirit of our business men. Their thoughts are evidently gloomy even at their most exhilarating times; their aspect is indeed a constant strain on pity and commiseration. Where, for instance, can be seen a show more dismal than the range of faces at a feast of some great City Company? The people are all evidently men of business, and besides, are leaseholders.

The tenure is not the disgrace and plague of any special

class; all ranks are injured by it, the nobility and West End residents as well as City clerks and working men. All suffer in domestic comfort; but to those whose state and dignity are held to be their great distinction leasehold influences must be specially obnoxious. To have lost the amplitude and individuality of a town house, and to be numbered in a row of compo-fronted slips of leasehold work, to be the subject of a common building speculation, with its transient fashions and vulgarities, is not consistent with the notion of an ancient aristocracy. The change from Grosvenor Square to Grosvenor Place is like an abdication of nobility. A nobleman till lately had a ducal residence between the river and Trafalgar Square; the House has been pulled down, the site has been converted into 'frontages,' and now his Grace finds shelter in a narrow leasehold tenement that faces a cross road behind the Queen's back garden.

The effect of leaseholds on the working classes is, however, of more consequence than loss of dignity; it tends with them directly to disease, to dissipation, and to death. At least one half of London houses are unfit for human beings to reside in. All the rooms are made so small that any locomotion in them causes injury to walls, partitions, furniture, and fixtures; everything becomes dilapidated, roughly worn, and consequently dirty. Then, their houses being sorry imitations of the homes of richer people, those who labour, thinking such display to be distinguished and correct, endeavour also, in their sordid way, to imitate their betters in their household goods and dress. Thus everything about the families and homes of working men is now a travesty of the pernicious follies of the middle class, as these again are imitators of the social ranks above them. People do not spend their money to secure convenient, healthy homes, but to appear to be above their sphere, to be acquainted with the fashion, and to assert their right and interest in the foolish custom of the day. The constant outlay that all this requires

is quite sufficient to reduce the circumstances of the people from financial affluence to habitual penury; and this is actually its effect. The money that might build or buy an unpretending, spacious, well-constructed house is spent in worthless 'elegance' and ornament; and the small, ill-ventilated hired rooms are crammed with cumbrous furniture and finery that make habitual cleanliness and health impossible, and phthisis has become the national disease.\*

In such 'rooms,' quite inappropriately named, two millions of the London population are compelled to pass their lives; and the effect upon the social habits and the moral character of men and women is deplorable. A man and wife can live perhaps in quiet in these little dens; but when the family begins to grow, and children multiply, and move and play, as children do, the father finds himself a surplusage at home, and goes for peace and quiet to the public-house, to join his fellow-sufferers from leasehold tenure. There he, of course, must drink, and then the habit comes, and grows. The company is not select; the man, if tolerably educated and intelligent, meets numbers who are otherwise, and he must make the best of, or become the worse for, his companions. To invite a chosen, well-conditioned few to his own home would be absurd; he has no home: the place is but a cupboard, or is possibly a sty. In one small room all culinary and domestic operations must be carried on, the men would therefore be entirely in the way; or if there is another cupboard, called the best front parlour, all its little floor is occupied by quasi-fashionable table, sofa, easy-chair, and chiffonier, the necessary demonstrations of gentility, and not a yard of width is left for movement and for social comfort and companionship.

The women, who are left and are supposed to be at home, are possibly still greater sufferers: they never get fresh air.

\* In London there are every year some twenty thousand deaths from chest disease.

The slightest ventilation in such little rooms is felt as a cold draught; and doors and windows are, as far as may be, kept hermetically closed. The children either turn into the streets, and live in dirt and license there, — leaseholds provide no playgrounds,—or, if they are retained at home, they sicken, pine away, and die. The woman's health gives way, and as she is alone to do the household work it is not done; the filth accumulates, and then the public-house becomes again a refuge or relief. Both man and woman have lost hope and energy, and home repels them. They have no idea of acting for themselves, or of discovering what would most improve their state at home. The house is not their business but the landlord's, and all houses for the working class are much the same; it is 'their lot,' and they accept it listlessly and sink into depravity.

Youths, also, of both sexes are habitually driven from home; they naturally seek society, just as 'their betters' do, but in their houses they can never find it. They must wander therefore, and all wholesome family restraint is consequently lost. Parental discipline is scarcely thought of or regarded; parents neglect their duty of command, and the young people, quite untutored in obedience and self-control, find in saloons and 'schools for dancing' most efficient schools of vanity and vice. In manners also they are more degraded year by year.

The great concern that has of late been manifested by the upper classes for the benefit of working men, and the alarm that is so frequently expressed at the increased consumption of intoxicating drinks, together show that the condition of the working classes in their homes is little known or understood. Intoxication as a habit is a common consequence, a natural result, of undersized, unwholesome rooms; and not the lower but the middle and the upper classes are the fabricators and maintainers of the leasehold system, which denies sufficient home accommodation to the poor. These classes are the real culprits in the case of metropolitan intemperance; and to

them, much more than to the working men themselves, the vice and misery of drunkenness are due. The working men have yet to learn the method of their misery ; when they attain this knowledge, and have also learnt the lesson of Co-operative Stores, they will promote societies to build on freeholds only, and will look for public sympathy in their determined, just repudiation of the modern leasehold system of house tenure.

There is a general, vague idea that because large freeholders appear to have some slight control, a better class of houses is erected under leasehold tenure than would be the case if each man had his separate freehold. It is hardly necessary to argue out this question : the result of this insuring system is around us, and the inhabitants of London are, for their wealth and culture, the worst housed population on the globe. Nowhere in Europe can be seen such lines of paltry houses, with such cribs of rooms ; and never was a people similarly subject to a landlord's interdict, prohibiting, by means of physical obstruction, ordinary social and domestic intercourse.

Two generations back, when urban leaseholds had become the rule, there still remained an old-established institution that afforded some relief. The parlour at the public-house was then the regular resort of heads of families and young men of the middle, tradesman class. There politics were talked and parish business was discussed, and there the French were valiantly defied, the slave-trade was denounced, and parliamentary reform was carried. There each company of sturdy boon companions, mostly sons of yeomen, sat and talked throughout the evening, with high argument ; and if at times their logic was defective and their information incomplete, they had the benefit of manly intellectual intercourse, and their bright mother wit was exercised and sharpened. These strong men, although a fragment only of the population, gave a tone of vigour to the public mind which cannot be expected from a generation who throughout their lives have been shut up

apart in little boxes with their wives and children. Very likely after twelve the argument would be a little clouded, though the talk and the tobacco would be hindrances to tippling rather than inducements to excess. But now there is no general opportunity for intellectual and social intercourse ; the public-house is but a dram-shop, parlours are unknown, there is, in fact, 'no house,' but only what is called a bar, where men and women go all day to stand and drink, and drown the memory of their miserable homes.

The richer classes can have no idea of the painful influence that narrow houses have on working people. They, by their wealth, can keep themselves sufficiently removed from contact with their own domestic architectural surroundings, which indeed are, practically, distant from them, suites of wide and lofty and well-lined enclosures ; and, if all is not agreeable, the upholsterer has ample opportunity and scope for his devices. But for the working man there is at home no intermediate distance, and no space for such appliances of furniture for ease and comfort ; in his sitting room a table and two chairs take all the width between the fireplace and the opposite partition wall, and when the chairs are occupied the room is full. Nor can the workman have the change of residence and scene that richer men afford when houses are not altogether to their mind ; he is directly, and without relief, in constant contact with his house, which is no choice of his, and is by no means his ideal, but in which he suffers daily. A most foolish custom has condemned him to this grievous home imprisonment for life.

The lower middle class are sufferers in much the same way as the workmen ; and, to escape the pressing evil, clerks and superior artisans and little tradesmen, who compose so large a part of the suburban population, leave their homes and lose their time and health and money at the billiard-room, the tavern, and the music-hall. This is the secret of the great expenditure on drink, a sum that in ten years would buy up

every London ground-rent ; and until this fact is understood no valid diminution of the drinking habits of the people can be hoped for. Yet no session passes without some endeavour to enact prohibitory laws against the liquor traffic ; the promoters overlooking the important fact that those who drink are masters of the situation, and that they alone, by a reform of social habits, possible on freehold tenure, can restrict and even stop the trade. If their ordained, legitimate enjoyments are denied to men, they will of course obtain some vicious substitute. In milder climates men can live in public in the open air, and consequently suffer little from small *pièces* or *appartements* ; but in London such extensive freedom is impossible. For ten months in the year all social meetings must be under cover, and as people cannot make their little cupboards serve as 'rooms,' they meet elsewhere. The crowds that gather round the gin-shop doors towards one o'clock on Sunday show the natural result : as long as London houses are not made for men, men will avoid them, and will go where they have space and light and company and welcome, and they then must drink. The custom does not lessen with increased intelligence ; it constantly advances. The more highly strung the nervous system of a man, the greater his imaginative power, and the more his mind is cultivated, the intenser is his sensibility to his misfortune : he can see no prospect of relief, and so he gets a temporary change. Hence the increase of drinking, as distinct from grovelling drunkenness ; and thus the lower middle and the working classes, as they rise in income and intelligence, spend more and more in liquor. We are furnished with the trade statistics of a public-house frequented by these people, and it seems that in the last fifteen years the trade profits have increased five-fold, without a single new house in the district.

There have been many efforts to establish reading-rooms for working men ; but reading-rooms are palliatives only :

those who make these efforts will admit that they themselves would not be satisfied with such poor substitutes for homes. A month's experience of 'Institution' life would perfectly suffice to show the value that young men and women set on public-houses of this kind. They soon discover that such education as they most require is not to be obtained in reading-rooms, but in the circle of their families and friends at home. It is the want of such home education that sends half the population to the taverns and saloons; the other half lament such painful error, but they still maintain, and help to propagate the cause of all the evil.

The outcry for the opening of museums and the theatres on Sunday is due chiefly to the want of spaciousness in urban living rooms. The people are domestic, fond of home, and naturally hospitable; but these virtues are on leaseholds specially forbidden. To be social, 'given to hospitality,' the great majority of Londoners must get away from home; they can have no 'church in their house,' they must 'forsake the assembling of themselves together'—quite a different thing, it may be here explained, from modern church attendance—and they 'treat' their fellows at the tavern bar; or in the reeking gin-shop, or the beer and brandy tea-garden, seek such enjoyment as excitement and indifferent companionship will give, in place of all the dignified and solid comforts of a home.

And here, again, the higher classes scarcely understand the popular demand. *They* need no galleries or museums to amuse them on a Sunday, their own rooms are large enough for social intercourse, and so they see their friends at home, a thing the working man is not allowed to do. His Sunday seldom is to him a day of happiness and rest; he gets no quiet, has no real relaxation and but miserable change. Instead of doing work he suffers irritation, and to avoid this suffering he systematically leaves his house and family, and 'breaks the Sabbath.'

An intelligent observer will perceive how clearly this un-

happy state of life and morals may be traced to the outrageous disregard of human nature in the first formation of a young man's home. The lower animals, birds, beasts, and insects, are superior to Londoners in household dignity. They don't take leases, and with them the speculating builders are unknown ; they start in life with building operations of their own ; their house is made in preparation for their family. In London, people are like hermit - crabs, content to shuffle into some ill - fitting, cumbrous, unconformable, rejected shell ; and there they make their ' home,' ridiculous to every beholder.

The leasehold system is a chief material cause of the improvident and thriftless habits of our working classes. It prevents the natural formation of considerate and prudent plans for life ; and men rush into matrimony, not perhaps too early, but before they have prepared themselves, by systematic self-control, and by the active self-respect induced by strictly economical expenditure, for the responsibilities of married life. True, there are Savings Banks ; but a ' deposit ' is to many a numerical abstraction. Working people do not see it, therefore do not love it, and in consequence too quickly sacrifice it for some visible absurdity which for a moment charms them. There should always be a worthy and immediate object for the workman's savings, something to be seen, and which can thus secure his interest and devotion. A young workman, when the term of his apprenticeship expires, or earlier, should everywhere have opportunity, by weekly payments, to secure a visible investment in an urban or suburban freehold of his own. The saving, prudent habit once begun and formed is apt to grow, increasing with his age. Young women too should know that if they save, instead of spending all they have in finery, they also may contribute to the purchase of their future home. This would be possible if freeholds were at hand and easily procurable ; but if the only method to secure a house is either to become a speculator in a bastard tenure, or to buy a rickety, dishonest place of misery,

a compound of the Pozzi and Piombi and the Bridge of Sighs, with every association of discredit and of disrepute, young men will hardly practise self-denial to attain so pitiful an end. No man is intelligently proud of any leasehold house; he may have some mean pride in its pretentiousness and paltry show; but if he has good sense and sensibility he feels the thing to be an illegitimate production, crooked and false in character, and he despises it. If occupants of leaseholds could imagine, even for a moment, that the houses were their own in fee, the thought would give them an astonishing experience of mental dignity. How much more powerful for good would be the actual fact that they were freeholders.

The effect of leasehold tenure is particularly manifested in the quality and stature of the London population. Separating recent importations and mere summer visitors, there is a large residuum of weakly, nervous semi-dwarfs. A fairly-built pedestrian going eastward from Belgravia to St. Luke's or Bethnal Green will, if observant, notice, or at any rate will feel, that as he goes he rises by comparison in animal physique. He seems to be a Saul among the people, and, without a thought, to add a cubit to his stature. But a country family for two generations subject to the influence of London houses obviously recedes towards the state of pre-historic and primordial humanity. If men are played upon by their environment, and those who are the fittest constantly survive, we have the philosophic reason for the undersize of genuine Londoners; they suit themselves to their habitual abode, and in their generations they become *homunculi* by reason of their little homes. In intellectual and moral power there seems to be a similar decrepitude: of native Londoners it is remarkable how few comparatively are distinguished men. The cause of the deficiency is clear enough; this leasehold tenure, with its cellular constructions and bad air, has naturally an enervating influence on the brain. Thus, when referring to an accident at Kensington,

Mr. Frank Buckland writes: 'The crowd stood like a lot of marble statues; nobody offered to move, or say, or do, or suggest anything. Upon my word, I think an English crowd is very selfish or exceedingly stupid.' Mr. Buckland's sharp alternative was needless; any London crowd may be entirely what he suggests. But this is their affliction, for the vicious circle makes itself complete. By leasehold influence the intellect is weakened and sinks into dull selfishness; it thus becomes incompetent to recognize the cause of its affliction and to undertake the cure.

This mental weakness manifests itself not merely in the general absence of superior men, but by a wide-spread disregard or want of scrupulous financial honesty. Those who have special insight into the domestic life of London families, and know more than the world at large about their income and expenditure, can give a curious account of their condition. A proportion, whether large or small we will not say, though it is fairly calculable, are careful people and habitually honest, but the rest proceed upon a constant system of indebtedness. Young men, who seldom fail to spend their money quite as quickly as they earn it, marry on their income, and expect, without a thought of calculation, that enough will come whenever more is wanted. The proceeding is not limited to any rank of life, but we will take in illustration the abundant class of clerks, commercial and professional, whose time is spent in most elaborate contrivances to prevent one set of 'Christian' gentlemen from cheating, or from being cheated by their fellow-Christians. Under present business circumstances these poor men are commonly condemned to life-long drudgery with little pay. Considering the kind of work they do, the pay, compared to what is given to accomplished artisans, is quite sufficient, and they might live well on it, with comfort, in a simple way. But they must live, it seems, 'like gentlemen'; their wives and daughters, too, are 'ladies,' which, interpreted by them, means people not accustomed to

associate with the working classes. The distinction may to some extent be justified. For centuries 'society' has severed manual labour from intelligence, and denied it social equity and personal respect. The lower middle class are therefore prudent in their way when they endeavour to dissociate themselves from people in a state of permanent inferiority. Position is especially important to the class which finds itself at the immediate edge of the established platform of respectability. A broad-cloth suit, soft hands, a house that has a kitchen quite distinct and separate from sitting-rooms, and the employment of a servant girl, however small and inefficient, are the strict essentials of a Londoner's gentility; his life is formed on these. A few men of the clerkly class may gain promotion in the business world, but of necessity the great majority remain in their ambiguous condition, with an income on a par with that of decent artisans, but with pretensions quite above the level of these common people, who are workmen.

Ranks in the scale of income differ, but in each the impulse of gentility is much the same. Incomes are often fixed, but fears and aspirations are unlimited and fluctuating, and expenditure is apt to follow feeling more than calculation. When the spirit of gentility has taken hold of men and women peace of mind escapes, desire is paramount, beneficence becomes almost or quite impossible, and honesty is honoured as a name. A clerk sees little in the business system of the present day to make him think that practical regard for other people's rights and property and interest is any mark of wisdom, or a thing that can with credit be avowed. He has been taught to make things safe, and for security to disregard the scrupulosities of rectitude. Success, according to the world and just within the law, is the great aim; and Christ's example and the golden rule are amply recognized by audible assertion of a creed in church on Sunday.

In almost every house in London there are evidences of the mental degradation that this tenure constantly occasions.

Furniture and fittings, works of art, and even dress, are all unworkmanlike and inartistic, or 'artistic,' which is worse, and fashionable, which is worst of all. The more a room is furnished 'in the modern taste' the worse it is. The motive and idea of modern furniture are vanity and affectation, and it seems that for the present every one must yield to these to some extent, or have no furniture at all. But what is very grievous is the fact that all this failing so reflects the public mind. The intellectual deficiency, the epidemic moral weakness, evident in occupants of leasehold houses, is well understood and recognized by men of trade, who by experience learn to know their customers. The very language and address of shopmen show what characters they have to deal with, and each newspaper contains a page or more of businesslike mendacities, which are well known to pay. The public catch at them; they promise more than what is right, and that is what so many people hope to gain. Of course they are deceived, and all the furniture and fiddle-faddle in their homes, intended to impress the world with their fictitious wealth, or 'taste,' or elegance and fashion, only show their great deficiency in character and sense.

This unnatural and strange condition of so large a population has still further evil consequences. A deficiency of independent thought, of individuality, and of social power; a habit of regarding public questions as mere themes for newspapers and subjects for home gossip, not involving personal responsibility and duty; and, as it seems, a comprehensive incapacity for corporate combination and development, and for collective will in action, mark the character of Londoners. They are a people spread abroad upon a territory, leaseholders, without enduring interest in the place, and seeking none; a huge outspreading multipede, invertebrate and headless.

During the last twenty years there have been frequently before the public schemes for the municipal self-government

of London ; all of them superficial, dealing with the population merely, severed from the land, and so without regard for permanently local interests. Such schemes would scarcely do substantial good : for large and permanent success the freeholders should undertake the primary requirements of a neighbourhood, the laying out of roads and streets and sewers, and gas and water works. Of these things leaseholders and tenants have a temporary user only, and are therefore, naturally, seldom zealous for their liberal development and sound construction. Public parks and playgrounds, viaducts and bridges, markets, baths and libraries, are still less likely to engage their serious care ; they may perhaps, after much painful talk, be glad to get these necessities for themselves, but they have no long-sighted, generous prescience and local statesmanship, which look beyond the little space and time that parish vestrymen can compass and appreciate.

The reason for this failure is the want of full proprietary interest. Apart from a few isolated Land Societies, there are not in all London probably a thousand men who live in their own freehold houses : other freeholders are few, and mostly public bodies and non-residents. The population generally are mere tenants, often in the third or even fourth degree, on terms extending from seven days to twelve months and three years. Commercial buildings, and most dwelling-houses rated at above three hundred pounds a year, are leased or underleased for seven years or more, the tenant doing all repairs ; but the pernicious system of agreements for a shorter term is rapidly extending upwards in the scale of rental.

Thus the general population is a mobile element and not a stable mass, and but a small minority take any active part in parish business. These are the vestrymen, who hold as leasehold property a large number of the smaller London houses, and who often make it their chief business to prevent, and not to undertake and forward necessary public works. The street paving, lighting, and road-making are directed by these people ;

and the state of the small thoroughfares, in Clerkenwell and Shoreditch for example, shows that leaseholders are not a class to be entrusted with the interests of the public, or even, when there is a need for generous consideration, with their own. The conduct of parochial affairs is left, however, to these little tradesmen, and to speculating builders, and a few surveyors and solicitors of the same inferior grade. These men, the lower quality of popular intelligence, promoted to transactions much beyond their usual experience and to duties far above their comprehension, are the local governments and administrators of the largest and most wealthy city in the world.

For more than forty years there has been lamentable want of a conservative, foreseeing care for public works in London. A full quarter of a century after the necessity for arterial drainage, for the Thames Embankment, and for the Holborn Viaduct, had been obvious to all the world, these works at length were undertaken; a whole generation having been denied the use of them, and left in needless danger and discomfort. Each work is, for a metropolis, an ordinary undertaking, save indeed in its excessive costliness and show. The Embankments are inferior in length to those of a provincial town in France, and yet they have been made to look absurdly self-important and pretentious. The new Viaduct is level, which is all that could be wanted; but besides it is a monument of coarse expensiveness, with a ridiculous pretence of patronage of art. The citizens of London make the Viaduct a demonstration of their wealth, and of their want of wit to use it.

Before the first Reform Bill, London and its environs received from every Government imperial and judicious care. It then was evidently understood that highways were a public need, and should be planned with forethought for extended local intercourse. On both sides of the Thames the town was girt by a succession of wide avenues, laid out with liberal judgment that refused to spoil a great improvement for the

sake of some minute economy. North of the river the Commercial Road, the City and New Roads, the New North Road, the Seven Sisters', Camden, Caledonian, and Finchley Roads, and Highgate Archway ; and on the Southwark side, the Kent and Dover Roads, and all the avenues that radiate from the Surrey Obelisk, are like 'imperial works, and worthy kings.' But since the Government has lost its healthy despotism scarcely a mile of thoroughly suburban road, apart from public parks and promenades, has been laid out as a main public thoroughfare. Streets at the rate of fifty miles a year have been constructed, not as thoroughfares however but as 'frontages,' and with regard alone to each small plot of land which is described as an 'estate.' There is no thought about the gradients and continuity of roads and streets, or of an avenue or great highway ; the only things considered are the rentals and the Building Acts. Suburban London is a tangle of small streets that lead to nothing but the score or two of houses in each line of frontage ; and in many places for a mile each way no leading and continuous thoroughfare occurs. The Board of Works, a delegation from the parish vestries, is engaged in rectifying crooked corners and extending narrow lanes in central, close-built London ; but, while all this little work is going on, the great suburban districts, owing to the habitual neglect and want of circumspection of the Board, are constantly supplying them with further opportunity for opening needful avenues, through finished neighbourhoods, in the most expensive way. Instead of carefully anticipating the advance of building work round London, and providing broad and leading thoroughfares in all directions, everything is left to chance, or to the smallest and most selfish interests ; and the Board, with all its peddling and expensive works, is falling year by year more distantly behind the public need. They even fail to guard the public rights which Parliament a century ago had granted. Thus, the Acts for the formation of the road from Paddington

to Finsbury provided that no houses should be built within fifty feet of the road. On the abolition of the toll-gates it was enacted that any building within this limit should be treated by the parish vestries as a common nuisance, and removed. This, during the existence of select vestries, saved the open space, but on the passing of Hobhouse's Act the little tradesmen, wishing to increase the area of rating, tacitly permitted the encroachment of first unsubstantial and then solid structures in advance of the original building line. The Board of Works has now to be applied to for permission to build over the front gardens. This permission is, on some parts of the line, habitually granted ; and throughout, wherever dwelling-houses are converted into shops, encroachments are continually made. For anything the Board of Works or any local board has done, there will be lost to London the important right of an extended open space as large as a suburban park, and the continued opportunity for making what might be the longest, finest boulevard in Europe.

The reason of it all is Leasehold Tenure. The inhabitants of London have no pride or satisfaction in the place ; they only wish to make their fortunes by its help, and then to get away from it as soon as possible. But why not move at once ? Of the four millions who inhabit greater London not a thousandth part have any permanent, substantial interest in the land or buildings. The whole population suffer from an evil custom which some hundreds only are persisting in to their own hurt, not knowing why, and which they never care to make the subject of inquiry. Each year the population, in sheer misery of home existence, is, as we have said, becoming more unsettled and inclined to move ; and in a few years' time the tendency of men will be nomadic. As it is they live in booths that scarcely can deserve the name of houses. Their best remedy will be migration : let them, having learnt the cause of all their suffering, decide by acclamation to remove, and quit the place entirely. The proprietors can still retain their piles of half-

burnt clay and matchwood ; and in a ghastly wilderness of hollow, empty houses, they may sit at gaping doors and melancholy windows, and in sorrow beg their bread as showmen and joint fabricators of the biggest and the ugliest folly that has been inflicted on the world.

In London, freehold property when leased, as almost all the London freeholds are, is as a rule unrepresented. It pays no annual rates, because these have, for due consideration, all been undertaken by the leaseholder, who is called the 'owner,' and the occupier in the first degree. There is, however, one remarkably absurd exception. Freeholders, who have no personal interest in the population, are, by a law designed for rural property, allowed to vote for guardians of the poor, whose duties are entirely personal, and thus by accident alone are local ; but in all matters having reference to public works, in which the permanent proprietors must have a special interest, this most important class is totally ignored.

It is a first essential for efficient action in municipal affairs that the constituency should be tax-paying freeholders ; or in other words that, by some equitable system of land transfer, those who are the subjects of taxation should obtain possession of the soil in fee. London, for instance, should be held as real property by Londoners. The ultimate proprietary leaseholder with more than twenty years of unexpired term should have a legislative right to purchase, at an equitable valuation, with the due ten per cent. for unwilling sale, all superior interests, including the fee simple of the land ; all titles should be registered and parliamentary, and transfers should be prompt and inexpensive. Every freeholder should have a vote, or two if he be resident, and any severance of the occupiers from the land in fee should be discouraged.

This can be done experimentally with very little individual disturbance. Of the land in London and its suburbs an unusually large proportion is in public hands ; it is in fact a mere security for income which the public use, and of which,

therefore, the great public has the paramount command. These estates of corporate bodies, livery companies, hospitals, commissioners and charities, and all church property, should be sold, with preference for the leaseholder, and the proceeds properly invested in the funds. The transfer would be an immense relief to governing committees, with a corresponding saving of administrative costs; and, as we have shown, a marvellous financial gain. The property would be more profitably used by individual freeholders, the amount of personal efficient interest in the land would be increased five hundred-fold; and in an equal ratio would be the increased care for beneficial public works, and the experienced intellectual power to achieve them.

It may be said in passing that these 'charity' estates are quite miscalled; they are not for the most part the result of 'love' but of excessive fear. The 'pious' donors made their legacies by way of expiation for perhaps their lifelong want of charity; and the result is a continuance of the evil thus compounded for. The constant public work of charity has been forestalled and superseded by a vicious eleemosynary system; and it thus occurs that, notwithstanding, or by reason of its wealth, the great metropolis of England has become a pauper warren for improvident and ill-conditioned people.

When the desired proprietary change has been in operation for a year or two, the public will appreciate their happy liberation from the incubus of law and middlemen, and public spirit will revive. The great proprietors throughout London will then see that their own interests and those of the community are quite concurrent, and their damage also, and that the cost of agencies and law, and the depreciated value of their property as leasehold, fall most heavily upon themselves; and seeing this they will, after some little self-assertion, of their own accord perhaps, apply the simple remedy.

There then would be a sound constituency of freeholders, possessing the intelligence, and interest, and will to scheme

and carry into execution local and extensive public works, which would make London a true mother city, an example for all towns in England and all cities in the world.\* At present the reverse of this is true, and, save where Parliament has intervened, the great metropolis has been and is a bad example; in good works deficient and a laggard, and in constitution wanting vital power. As well make visitors at Brighton the rate-paying constituency and local corporation of the borough, as rely on the inhabitants of London, in their present lackland state, for the strong, enterprising government of the metropolis.

The principle of the expropriation of house property and ground-rents has within the last few years made demonstrable progress. In 1872 it was called 'communism,' which it seems is something shocking, though most people are accustomed daily to the communistic use of light and air and of the Queen's highway, and are not scandalized, nor sensible of public harm. But it is said that purchase by compulsion of the seller is a trespass upon private right. Precisely so; and many another wholesome project equally infringes the prescriptive rights of property. An area a hundred times as great as that of London has, within the memory of men of middle age, been forced from its proprietors because the public good required it; and yet the thing was not called 'communism.' Commons—a very communistic word—have been extensively enclosed for the behoof of the adjoining land proprietors; but this has not been by the said proprietors esteemed a policy of confiscation. Tithe Commutation Acts were thought to be conservative in aim, and copyhold enfranchisement has not been stigmatized as revolutionary. Even the control of 'personalty,' not real property or freehold of the soil, has

\* A report from Luton says, 'The land on which the town is built was sold by the Marquis of Bute in small freehold plots. Many of the artisans own their cottages; and there is scarcely anything in the nature of a rough class in the town, and but little poverty.'

been restrained by legislation; and the Betting Acts, and what is called Thelusson's Act, are clear encroachments on proprietary rights. More recently our timid 'communistic' critic, 'rising,' as he says, 'above a false and narrow interpretation of vested interests in property,' declares that 'the expropriation clauses of the Artisans Dwellings Act are not at all too sweeping for their object, but are based upon a definite assumption that where public necessities conflict with private rights, private rights must submit to reasonable modifications. Of course this is not a new principle; for the compulsory purchase of lands under private Acts of Parliament is a familiar idea to modern Englishmen. The novelty consists in the recognition of the fact that under certain circumstances the interest of the lowest class might be the interest of the whole community. The Artisans Dwellings Act proceeded strictly on the apostolic maxim that if one member suffers all the other members suffer with it. The remediable grievance of one section of the community is the grievance of all the rest.' Which is, in fact, our theory of 'communism.'

All this is hopeful and judicious; it appears that other things than communism may be even less agreeable to contemplate; besides, it is allowed to be 'notorious all over England that no cottages are so bad as those that are cheaply run up,'—on leasehold tenure?—'either to live in or to let, by persons of the labouring grade.' To save discussion we accept the statement, and reply that as the leasehold system has extended and is nearly universal, its bad influence has brought and keeps the standard of house-building miserably low. Even on land bought and divided up by freehold land societies the habits of the leasehold builders influence the character and execution of the work. There is, however, on those freehold land estates which are entirely covered a remarkable improvement in the buildings. The more recent houses are much better than those first erected, and these also are continually being made more comfortable and in every way improved. Thus, not-

withstanding the great general ignorance of the building art, the natural instinct of the freehold occupants compels them to spend time and care and money on their houses, while the common trade of building has become demoralized because it is deprived of this instructed, zealous, personal control. True, there are Building Acts and sanitary regulations, but these things, which are actual evidence of public folly and neglect, and but a feeble substitute for public knowledge and opinion, would themselves be much more efficacious on a freehold tenure. Were there only one proprietor or interest a monition could be served immediately, and it would be zealously attended to by men made sensible and wise by constant thoughtfulness about their well-appointed freehold homes.

Good has been attempted, and in part no doubt achieved, by philanthropic individuals and societies, who have built large blocks of dwellings for the artisans and poor; but this is only an improvement, sometimes a mere change of evil, not a cure. The buildings often are of many storeys high, to get the largest population possible upon an acre of the soil; a method which ignores or very much neglects the fact that light and air are needful for the due support of life, and that without sufficient space these cannot be obtained. The fashion has, however, been distinctly set, and now the working classes may look forward to a century of constantly increasing solar obscuration. For the future light and air will be still further banished from the streets as well as from the houses: even leaseholds have not brought us to this horrible condition. The small tenements in Bethnal Green have not a pleasant reputation, but compared with a continuous neighbourhood of 'sanitary' dwellings they are a suburban paradise. For instance, near the Hackney Road the streets are tolerably wide, the houses too are low, and there are 'gardens,' so that the inhabitants can see their copper-coloured sun, when he sometimes appears, and also get some little colour of their own. But in most model dwellings sun and moon will be but astronomical expressions; the horizon

and the zenith will be understood as synonyms; and the young population will become mere pallid fungi, growing feebly at the bottom of their *cañon* or their 'well.' In London, building spaces should be open, not confined; in this vast wilderness we want no 'constant contiguity of shade.' Our climate is not that of Genoa or Naples, and our first sanitary need is ample sunlight, with its consequence, fresh, moving air. Shrewd market gardeners understand all this: they do not rest when they have drained the land and regulated the manure, nor do they place their shrubs as close as possible upon the ground. They arrange, judiciously, to give each plant its share of sunlight and of air, and even open out the centres of their trees and bushes to the sun: they cherish health, and, constantly observing nature's laws, they look for multiplied and healthy fruit. Our builders and philanthropists too often it appears regard existence only, not the joy and the exuberance of wholesome sunny life: they plan for a congestion of the population that will yield them five per cent., and on these terms they undertake to warehouse men and women.

The apartments thus provided are small, low-pitched rooms, some ten feet square, with what is called 'sufficient ventilation.' In such places even the most necessary movement of the air must cause a draught. The result is evident: all ventilation is, where possible, prevented; constitutions then must gradually fail, and doctors' bills will come to supplement the moderate rent, and bring the cost of model lodgings up to the level of substantial, spacious houses for our artisans.

There is a minimum of human need in dwellings as in clothes. Places and ages differ, and our model lodgings might be sumptuous for troglodytes and Esquimaux, though quite unsuitable for London workmen, who want homes for comfort and not cabins to confine them. Ordinary day rooms should be sixteen feet, at least, from wall to wall. The fireplace and fender, dining table, with a chair on either side, and room for comfortable movement, make this space im-

perative.\* In model lodgings movement is impossible, and there are only 'sitting' rooms. The sleeping rooms will just contain the bed perhaps, but not by any means the necessary air. The lodging-house societies mean well and have done partial good: their efforts so far are deserving of the public thanks. But first endeavours seldom perfectly succeed; and those most gratefully inclined would fail to thoroughly approve of a benevolent association of slopsellers who should offer cheap and well-made clothes invariably undersized, or, for our latitude, as limited in wholesome shelter as the earliest garments that we read of.

It is impossible that a few men, or even many, should assume the care of house supply for millions of the London working classes. 'During thirty years, up to 1875, private efforts, including those of Lady Burdett Coutts, Sir Sydney Waterlow, and the Peabody Trustees, had housed only 26,000 persons, not a great deal more than half the number which is yearly added to the population of London.' In the work that has been thus accomplished much habitual evil is avoided, and the buildings certainly are genuine and honest. But they are essentially commercial speculations, made, most properly as such, to pay a moderate percentage. This, in household practice and economy, is, however, most distinctly inhumane. A house should never be a thing of commerce to its occupants. It should be made a generous sacrifice to their well being, physical and moral; and thus, sacred in its character and dedication, it would become an object of affection and respect and loving care.

'There is about the inner life of a humble home a something one may almost say of sanctity, which is not so apparent, at all events on the surface of things, in splendid mansions. *Their* splendour, somehow or other, seems a

\* A plan of 'an American cheap cottage,' lately published, shows a 'living room' sixteen feet by eighteen, with a kitchen nearly half this size adjoining. All quite proper, natural, and freehold.

matter of course: it is taken for granted both by those who witness it and by those who possess it. It is transmuted money. There is no poetry; if hearts are moved by it, it is not in that fashion or to that issue that it touches them. Quite different is it with the humble home. There every object seems to have a pleasing history. The care that is taken of it tells you how hard it had been come by. You read in it a little tale of the labour, the frugality, the self-denial expended on its acquisition. It is a revelation of an inner life which you are the better for contemplating and sympathizing with' (Rev. F. Barham Zincke).

Many proprietors have spent large sums in what they think, and certainly intend to be, the improvement of small cottage property on their estates; but in the great majority of cases they, like the societies, have only made a change of evil. Our old houses were constructed well, according to the habits of the people, and allowing for the state of sanitary science at the time. Thus, when a conflagration was required to clear the wealthy town of London of the plague, the cottages of labouring men would hardly have attained to hygienic excellence. They were, however, built to live in, and the working men who planned and built them made the comfort, as they understood it, of the inmates their sole aim. The outer walls were thick, the openings small; the thatch was ample, thick, and overhanging, keeping out both heat and cold, and throwing off the rain. The rooms were tolerably large, but low: in those days height would probably appear to labouring men uncomfortable, and would in winter seem to make the rooms feel cold. Their betters, if they did submit to loftier, larger rooms, had canopies and screens, and had contrived the four-post bed with heavy curtains to obtain the necessary closeness. In those times the country cottager resembled his superiors in folly and in sense; but now he has no architectural individuality at all: the labourer has no personal control or interest in the building of his house. Some inexperienced draughtsman plans a

cheap arrangement of small cells, with nine-inch outer walls to let in cold and damp, and a thin roof of slates and lath and plaster ; just above an inch of rapid heat and cold conductors intervening between shivering sleepers and the frosty air. The essential element of these designs is 'moderate cost,' then prettiness of elevation. Comfort and space, security from heat and cold, the very object of a house, are quite secondary matters, and in most cases seem to have escaped attention. There has, however, been of late much care for family morality, and so the moderate-sized bedroom is divided by two thin partitions, and becomes three closets, or there is an attic made of slate and plaster in the roof ; the sitting room is but a cupboard, and the place is altogether fitter for a kennel than a home. The cottagers are not allowed to take care of themselves, and, in true artistic rivalry, to build on their own freehold land according to the general progress of intelligence, for comfort and with due regard for health, their plans and work improving year by year as they gain practical experience ; but the proprietor becomes a special providence, and plans these little chambers so that they may bring the calculated interest. His cottages are then by others, and himself perhaps, esteemed to be a boon to working people. What the labourers who occupy them say and feel is quite another matter ; their opinions are not asked, and seldom are their wishes and desires consulted.

To those who have immediate observation of the present system it is clear that leasehold tenure is the cause of the increasing badness of all building work. The greater showiness of modern houses is but a screen or cover-misery. Each year there is more 'architectural' display, and yet more meanness. The idea that workmen undirected should reform our system of house-building does perhaps to people of the present day appear absurd ; but probably they do not recollect or understand that the old houses which were built so 'large and free' as to become 'a sort of poetic cultivation' were

contrived and built by workmen, and that modern leasehold houses, 'mean and cramped externals,' are designed by 'architects' and those who imitate their method. We have given to working men the suffrage, and they vote in liberty on our political affairs; might we not also set them free to build, with genuine artisan intelligence, their own and other people's houses?

Society is often well intentioned, and has shown much patronizing interest in working men; but, in the midst of its benevolent career, society may well consider whether it is equal to the task of building proper houses for the whole community of workmen. After such consideration they will probably be led to seek some method by which workmen may themselves secure the first necessity of civilized humanity. The poor man's house, for instance, might be held as freehold, like the rich man's railway, and be made convertible as easily as railway stock and Three per Cents. These things could be done, if people of the upper classes had distinct perception and a favourable will; but here they fail. They are exclusive, as they say, conservative; and by their long infliction of bad laws and their support of evil customs, by the cost and intricacy and delay of legal transfers, and by the sad maleficence of leasehold tenure, they have kept, and still they keep, the working classes alienated from the soil and in a state of degradation. We are often told that land is free, is not 'tied up' by any statute. This is only subterfuge. The rich who tell us this can pay the small proportion of law costs upon their own large purchases; but they are negligently, if not of set purpose, willing that the working classes shall be mulcted in a heavy fine—not less than ten per cent., and frequently much more—if they, in their small way, intrude on the great territorial preserve, and seek to hold, or traffic in, the soil in fee. This all, in feeling and in fact, should be entirely changed, and everything that hinders small investments in house property and freehold land should be removed, that men may spend their money

without hindrance on their freehold homes, and make them the chief exhibition of their frugal industry, and of their wealth, in money, in imagination, and in common sense.

And now that we have carefully discussed the leasehold system, have described its evil influence, and have pointed out the safe and only cure, we may refer appropriately to the interests of art. House building by the people is the first great opportunity for art, and houses for the working classes, built and designed in building by the working men themselves, have always been its elementary, progressive school. Of architecture as an art the public are entirely ignorant. There is some small scholastic and still smaller antiquarian knowledge, which gentlemen occasionally demonstrate at Institutes and Architectural Societies. With such persons architecture is a luxury, a 'fine art,' for superior people to design and criticize; and to amuse these people, and the public who accept their dicta, millions annually are spent in travesties of art. On every other question that affects their daily lives it is supposed that Englishmen are apt to form an independent, practical opinion of their own: the art of building then should hardly be excepted. They reproach the 'architectural profession,' not discerning that their own neglect of homely art has made this counterfeit profession possible. Were the public in like manner to abstain from ordinary reading, and then pride themselves on their superiority to literary knowledge, this would be regarded as absurd. Yet men who may for years have little use for literary gifts have daily need of building, and are subject to its influence for good or evil. As the public grow more wise, they will repudiate vain ignorance of building work; they will at all times recognize its dignity, and with delight they will appreciate its value and its power.

All men of sense and sympathy will spend their money in some way at home, and the first care of every man should be

to understand the fabric of his house. To go beyond, and be a virtuoso in the arts of Italy and Greece, when everything is barbarous at home, is an absurd neglect of opportunity. In popular domestic architecture with a systematic freehold tenure, art, constantly employed in combination with utility, would be enduring, dignified, and reticent. Men's intellects when occupied about such work would be ennobled, and the house itself would every year be so improved as to command the higher price spontaneously offered for judicious and artistic work, superior to fashion.

On the other hand the leasehold system is in art, in policy, and in all things that affect the character of men, an obvious injury and failure; and it must ere long be superseded. The substantial tenure that will take its place is nothing new or complex, but the earliest, the simplest, and most dignified on record. Abraham, although a stranger, would not 'take' Machpelah even as a gift, he bought it as a burial-place, and David equally repudiated an uncertain tenure. Our fine medieval buildings were on freehold land, and art has wholly perished from the scene of leasehold tenure. If we return to unsophisticated freeholds art will certainly revive; each householder will seek to make his home more beautiful and excellent, and by this exercise of noble care he will obtain a corresponding increment of honour and of self-respect.

Nothing whatever has been said, or can be said, in rational defence of leasehold tenure. It is a custom wholly destitute of merit, and without beneficence. It is alike injurious to the freeholder, and to those who build, and buy, and rent the houses, and inhabit them. It degrades the moral tone and spirit of the people, it prevents municipal reform, it is a constant and increasing injury to the workmen and the poor, and in poetic building art the whole of London is its pattern card. Is then the system worth preserving?

The lawyers may be first appealed to for a merciful reply. Their antiquated and unkindly artifices have bewitched house

property, and, in compassion, they might now resolve to set it free. Those who most largely deal with urban leaseholds will acknowledge all the evil that we have, with prudent reticence, described, and will, it may be hoped, devise and publicly promote the remedy. The age is one of law reform, and there are legists of supreme capacity to undertake the work. If such reformers will examine the three Acts for Copyhold Enfranchisement\* they there will find the form and details for a bill to liberate all urban Corporate, and Church, and Charity estates from leasehold bondage. Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Act,† and the simple forms for mortgage and conveyance used by the Irish Church Commissioners, would supply additional suggestions for the scheme. For method and completeness, Mr. Coote's achievement in the Fines and Recoveries Abolition Act‡ would also be an excellent example.

The profession will not grudge so politic and generous a change, but, on consideration, will most gladly welcome it. Although their business costs on leasehold property are large, the gain is not a recompense for the discredit, wholly undeserved, and for the purposeless responsibility which 'leasehold' lawyers and conveyancers continually suffer. And besides, these gentlemen well know, by practical experience, that cumbrous documents and heavy costs are 'in restraint of trade.' Stockbrokers would account their occupation hopelessly oppressed if, for their simple transfers and their small commission of one-eighth per cent., there should be substituted various quasi-legal documents, with parchments, and instructions, and attendances, and fees, and corresponding charges. Lawyers are scarcely less discerning than financiers: they will be the first as a profession to repudiate the leasehold system, with its cares and complications and its ill repute, and will, as a Conservative reform, promote its gradual and complete extinction.

\* 4 and 5 Vict. c. 33; 15 and 16 Vict. c. 51; and 21 and 22 Vict. c. 94.

† 33 and 34 Vict. c. 46.

‡ 3 and 4 Will. IV. c. 74.



# ‘RELIGIOUS ART.’

BY

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*WHAT has never been put in question has not been proved; what people have not examined without prepossessions they have not examined thoroughly.*—DIDEROT.

*RELIGION must be for Religion's sake; Morality for Morality; and Art for Art. The Good and the Holy cannot be the way to the Beautiful, any more than the Beautiful can be the way to the Useful, the Good, and the Holy. It leads only to itself.*—VICTOR COUSIN.

*WHEN the fine arts become a means to some end out of themselves, be that end what it may, the highest or the lowest, such appreciation of art can lead to nothing very good.*—MRS. JAMIESON.

## ‘RELIGIOUS ART.’

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ON SUNDAY, the 5th of October, 1873, the Chapel of King’s College, London, was reopened, after having been decorated. ‘The Rev. Professor Plumptre occupied the pulpit, and dealt generally with the subject of the utilization of art in ‘Divine worship.’ After a word of congratulation on the altered aspect of the building, the preacher continued: ‘The wider ‘teaching of history warns us indeed that a time of much de-‘votion to the æsthetic side of culture or religion is not always ‘a time of high purpose, or of firm resolve. The strange ‘irony of history has left the word ‘Renaissance’ to be almost ‘a byword and a proverb of degeneracy and decay. For old ‘faith became weak and feeble; and, so far as that revival of ‘culture extended, there was no new hope and energy to take ‘its place. Whatever there was of strength and vigour mould-‘ing the thoughts of men and the destinies of nations was found ‘in the rougher nations of the north; associated sometimes ‘with an indifference, sometimes with even a repugnance, to ‘art as ministering to religion, and condemning its excessive ‘culture (and almost any degree of culture has at times been ‘thought excessive), as fatal to the manliness and simplicity ‘of the nation’s life, emasculating while it polished it. We ‘must acknowledge that the Puritan or the Scotch ideal of ‘human life, though it may be wanting in loveliness and light, ‘is nobler than the Italian and the French. Art has a beauty

'and a glory of her own ; but steadfastness of purpose, patient endurance, truth in the inward parts, these constitute the true strength of a nation. I hold, and always have taught, that art has her ministry to fulfil in the religious life of man.'

The discourse seems fairly to express the feelings and opinions of intelligent and liberal-minded men among the clergy ; and it may perhaps be taken as a measure of their knowledge of the scope and history of art. It is a hopeful demonstration ; and, though the knowledge is defective, the doctrine is erroneous, and the feeling not quite true, the will is evidently good. There is strong desire for improvement ; and, in perfect sympathy with this desire, we now propose to take the reverend Professor and our readers into serious conference, and thus endeavour to expound to them the way of art more perfectly.

We venture first to object to the Professor's reading of the history of art, and to the lesson he has learnt. It is evident for instance that 'a time of much devotion to æsthetic culture' must be 'a time of high purpose and of firm resolve.' There is no logical difficulty here ; to aim at æsthetic culture is 'a high purpose,' and 'much devotion' includes 'a firm resolve.' If the Professor means that when art is cultivated public spirit fails and patriotism declines, we appeal to the whole range of history against his doctrine. The recorded works of Moses and of Solomon, of Joash and of Nehemiah ; the histories of the Athenian commonwealth and people fighting for existence ; of Italian cities struggling to maintain their municipal rights ; of France striving for national union ; of England working out its liberties under the long line of Norman, Angevin, and Plantagenet kings ; all of whom were simultaneously engaged on works of the highest national art, testify against him. The Professor is, however, in idea near the truth, but his form of words has very much misled him. Had he said that a time of high purpose and of firm resolve is not always a time of much devotion to the æsthetic side of

culture or religion, he would have been one step nearer the truth, but still not wholly correct; for religion has no æsthetic side, any more than it has a clean side, or a grammatical side, or a pecuniary side; the observance of cleanliness, of syntactical accuracy, and of monetary laws, being only incidentally associated with religious sentiment and practical devotion. Then, as is obvious, ‘the Scotch ‘ideal of human life’ was not originally wanting in the loveliness that art supplies; the churches at Dunfermline, Glasgow, Jedburgh, and Melrose, show that in Scotland, as elsewhere, art was a national expression of delight in work, and was the exhibition of a character of mind essentially the same as that which raised the glorious medieval monuments of Italy and France. The neglect of æsthetic culture by the Scotch and by the Puritans was no evidence of superior moral rectitude or of elevated thought; if this neglect was more than an expediency, local and temporary, it merely showed that, like many since their time, and down to the Professor’s day, the Puritans had not yet learnt to use analysis, and to see the difference between association and identity. They esteemed the Church of Rome erroneous and corrupt in faith and worship; and, observing that imaginative art, the noblest then in vogue, was used abundantly about religious buildings, they, like the savages who thought a European’s clothes were born upon him, carelessly conceived that art was the æsthetic side or covering of superstition, cognate and identical; and they proscribed it.

Thus, while the Government of France was striving with too much success to root out ‘simple faith,’ and to expel the Huguenots, the Puritans and Scotch were by an equal error led to extirpate the arts; and to this day the French and British nations suffer from these follies of their ancestors. Yet, the Professor being witness for ourselves, we still maintain the Puritan delusion about art and its ‘religious side.’

Of late, society of all ranks and creeds and classes has been so grievously deluded by this heresy about ‘Religious Art,’ that the relative positions, attributes, and powers of art and godliness should, for once, be systematically ascertained. This is our present object; and after careful demonstration of sound doctrine on aesthetics in relation to religion, we shall show by well-known specimens of recognised ‘religious art,’ how clearly these examples prove our rule.

Art, first of all, is work; labour is its foundation, and the human hand its necessary instrument. Religion is an aspiration of the soul; the hands know nothing of it; they perform their work in strict obedience to the will, whatever be its motive, whether sacred, non-religious, or profane; and so their art is totally indifferent; in it they know not God; their work is not religious. Thus, a master-workman planning a fine church may be the subject of religious feeling, or entirely sceptical about a God; these views do not affect his plan; the object of the building is prescribed, and he has only to construct the walls and piers accordingly, developing such forms of elevation and interior construction as may best express his ideality and sense of beauty. This is aesthetic architectural design; and, like the handiwork, is merely intellectual and imaginative, having no religious side.

Proceeding one step further, we arrive at what is called the ornamental work, the carving, painting, metal work, and furniture; these all are efforts of the imagination, and of the adapting mind, directing the experienced and facile hand, entirely without religious doctrine, sentiment, or aspiration. The art workman may be a religious man, the work may be devoted to religious service, but it is still entirely devoid of the religious sentiment.

Again, in what is called historic painting, and in sculpture, there may be illustrations or fictitious records of prophetic, biblical, and sacred scenes; but these are efforts of imagination only, not of piety. Pietro Perugino was for many years

a leading painter of religious subjects, and his pre-Raphaelite art would probably be called strictly religious ; but the painter was by no means what the Church would call devout ; his art was the expression of perception, not of sentiment. Many a scoundrel has depicted, with consummate art, the highest virtues in historic action. No one exceeded Raphael in pourtraying the sweet innocence of childhood, or the virtuous gaze of modest womanhood, but this was no expression of the painter’s moral purity ; the modesty that he pourtrayed was human, not religious, cognisant of man, and not perhaps of God. Or if we turn to Fra Angelico, whose miniatures and larger frescoes are etherealised so that the human forms appear unfit for mundane use, and only suitable for heavenly spheres, we find no utterance of religion in his paintings. The religious Frate, while he worked with perfect purity of motive, only made his pictures eminent for delicate refinement, in conception, and in form and colour. All the holy scenes that he so gracefully imagines and depicts are phantoms of his mind, not utterances of his heart. His heart was in his work, undoubtedly, but in a mundane, not in a religious sense. The graceful, very striking fresco of the Annunciation on the wall of the San Marco corridor, shows how fervid and direct and simple his imagination was ; but he depicts an act or incident, and not an aspiration.

Subjectively then we find that art has no ‘religious side :’ the artistic workman, whether pious or profane, is equally unable to develop true religious feeling in his work. His art discovers nothing of his holiness of life or even of desire ; it is not personally ‘religious.’

Negatively, however, a man’s religious feeling will affect his work ; it keeps it pure and free from immorality. A painting may be coarse, but this is very much a question of conventional and social manners ; coarseness of expression may result from no indelicacy, but from a simple and ingenuous rendering of the customs of the time ; but many an artist’s

work has been, of absolute intention, vicious and profane. Such tendency is basely human, and too often has been seen in works of art, which are a form of human utterance quite capable of giving full expression to impiety and vice, though not attaining to a like facility in matters of religion.

Or if we put aside the artist, and consider the effect of art on the beholder, we shall find that its 'religious side' again is undiscoverable. Art has undoubted influence on the mind; it is a pleasurable impulse to imaginative action, and a healthful means of mental exaltation and development in the sympathetic, sensible admirer; it charms and glorifies the non-religious side of human nature; but its very highest works, produced by men of various developments of mental, moral, and religious character, though they may exhibit the phenomena of nature in their greatest charm, and include every distinguishable action and expression in the human face and form, leave the religious feelings quite untouched; the sentiment evoked is not divine, but human in its sympathy and aim.

Much has been said and written on 'old faith,' and of the wonders that it wrought in art. The theory is plausible and popular; there is a gratifying sense or mild religiousness in the idea that the excellence of our old buildings was an evidence of faith; and the beholder may with little effort make himself believe that his delight and admiration also are an 'act of faith,' and that, without need of any sacrifice or abnegation, all the merit of the beauty and the noble work that he so well appreciates is efficiently his own, and thus that he is gloriously 'religious.' The fact, however, is that faith has no creative power in art; it works on very different lines. It does not deal, like art, with what is limited and tangible, but with the infinite and undiscovered. 'Old faith' did nothing in the way of art; the old workmen did the work, and then the faithful used it. The old master-workmen built with dignity, simplicity, and ease, and they were

able thus to express themselves in stone with infinite delight ; their alert imaginations, unencumbered by the fashionable follies of the world, became an ever-flowing source of art in beautiful variety ; the artificer in each material discoursed in his own workman’s language, in accordance with the constantly advancing rules of art. All this humanity, variety of thought, and beauty of idea, when it is grandly emphasized by the majestic height, and the contrasted light and shade in a cathedral church, appears impressive and mysterious ; the untutored, unaccustomed mind becomes confused ; and as the building is devoted to religion, and is consecrated and called holy, the impression given by the holy place is, without thought or question, held to be ‘religious.’ Thus ‘the religious side of art’ is but a term of place ; it only means that the ‘religious’ work of art was seen in church. Precisely the same art might be employed in a casino or a gambling-house, and then with equal reason it would be esteemed profane.

A man not wanting in sagacity attends a ritualistic church ; the building is correct in style and rubrical arrangements, and adorned with marbles ‘tastefully’ arranged ; the reredos is designed by somebody of eminence ; the painted windows and the corresponding decoration on the walls are equally superior in their production ; and the whole scene impresses our sagacious devotee. He is at once religious and admiring ; and he imagines, or assumes, without a thought, that his admiring wonder helps, or is ‘a side of,’ his religion. Yet these two things have no relationship at all ; the impression he receives is due to ignorance, and is directly kin to the delight of rustics at a village fair. His scope of vision is entirely filled by things that he can apprehend, but is not, by habitual discriminating knowledge, capable of comprehending ; and though these objects may in aspect be familiar, yet in meaning they appear mysterious ; and thus, and by association, they become to him impressive and ‘religious.’

The style of architectural ornament in general modern use is not, as those who talk of 'the religious side of art' suppose, a thing of beauty, founded on intelligent design; it is a mere display of costliness, a travesty of art, a vulgar fashion. There are wise men whom it affects, but, most obviously in their weakness, not in their wisdom. It is that branch of luxury which claims the homage of the eye, and most impresses any region of the individual and social brain which is especially removed from understanding. The buildings of all kinds of architecture which for four hundred years have been the admiration of the age are 'ornamental,' not artistic, and our chief illustrations of 'the æsthetic side of culture' and 'religion' are but monumental tributes to the deity of wealth, the lust of eye, and pride of life.

The term 'Religious Art' has been accepted by the clergy and the connoisseurs as a superior expression, without previous care to ascertain its meaning, and to find whether in fact it had a rational interpretation. The expression is entirely without meaning. It is a technical or trade term accepted ignorantly by the half-reasoning, inartistic multitude; and is applied particularly to insipid or spasmodic, pietistic painting, and to mechanical and worthless work in architecture and in decoration. The modern German legendary paintings of religious subjects, and the trashy art that glorifies a popish shrine; the tawdry decorations of a ritualistic church or an advanced dissenting chapel; churches that inartistic drawing-masters build, in trading imposition on the clergy; our cathedral restorations; and the carving and inlaid work that glorify a reredos or a range of stalls, are all, because connected, in some way entirely secular, with sacred history, or with the church, called, generally, by the trade, by clerics, and by connoisseurs, 'religious art.' These words, when used as an abbreviated form for 'art connected with religion,' are of course permissible as a trade technicality, just as in the trade 'religious bookbinding'

might be used to signify the binding of religious books ; and yet the binder’s art is not esteemed religious, nor do the binder’s morals, or belief about the subject of the books he binds, in any way affect or sanctify his work ; his art is wholly secular.

Again, we hear that ‘history and doctrine were *taught* in ‘form and colour.’ Let us test the operation in a simple way. A painting of a woman carrying a man’s head, just severed, pale and bleeding, tells no tale ; it represents a state of action merely, without progress, and with no scope for interest or sentiment. The head might be the relic of a battle-field or the last subject of the executioner, and may be destined for the surgery or directly for the grave ; but nothing in the painting would instruct the ignorant beholder in the history of Judith, or of the daughter of Herodias. The teaching that, in Bible history, two women were the heroines of such a scene, must come by language, not by art. The picture is an illustration only ; an imaginative, and in most things totally inaccurate, description of the scene ; language alone informs us how the Baptist’s head was brought to Herod. Form and colour, in a picture, as distinguished from an unimaginative portraiture of actual fact, cannot teach anything, but only illustrate what has been taught ; and this, invariably in sacred incidents, with a most painful diminution of the dignity and interest of the inspired narration. The exalted sentiment of sacred history is never made more manifest by art ; but its events are used as a sublime, and boundless, all-engrossing theme for art to work upon in its inferior way. The story of the Crucifixion is the most impressive in the history of man ; but, in his masterpiece at Venice, Tintoret entirely fails to impress the intelligent beholder with religious awe. The feeling is of admiration, not of gratitude ; and ‘watchers’ say, ‘How fine the picture ‘is ;’ not ‘Truly this man was the Son of God.’

The pictures, carvings, and mosaics in the early Christian churches, though incapable of teaching, were very suitable

as decorations. They were historical, or legendary, as accepted by the Church, and gave ample opportunity for the display of incident, and for the imaginative use of form and colour ; they became artistic illustrations of Church history and doctrine, but not independent or prevenient instructors. Had instruction been their object they would no doubt have been made, historically, more correct ; whereas we find that they most scrupulously followed all the errors, failures, and excesses of the accepted doctrines, both of fact and faith.

This impotence of art is not confined to its 'religious side ;' in secular affairs its incapacity is equally complete. A young child, entirely ignorant of history and of implements of war, might be amazed by the two paintings of 'The Death of 'Nelson' and 'The Meeting after Waterloo ;' but, left to them alone, an incident, instead of history, is in each case presented to his observation. What it refers to, what it means, beyond the instant fact, whence it arose, and what it tends to, are entirely beyond his present means of knowledge, and beyond the descriptive power of the painter's art.

Or if we turn to earlier efforts of 'Religious Art,' and seek for teaching in 'impressive symbolism,' we are similarly unsuccessful. Even the Cross itself is, to an ignorant beholder, nothing but two harshly intersecting beams of wood ; and, failing the Gospel, it would be entirely without a doctrine. But when the story of the Crucifixion has been heard and learnt, the Cross may be, to those unhappy people who discover nothing better for the purpose, of some use as a memento of the Saviour ; and on buildings it is properly exhibited to mark their dedication to religious services. The symbols used in early Christian sculpture of themselves taught nothing, and their tendency, as in most cases of symbolic utterance, was to obscure the original idea ; they were the temporary, insufficient substitutes for written words among artistic people not well conversant with letters and orthography. But the Alpha and Omega, a Vesica or a Fish,

a ‘Dolium’ or a Dove, could never teach ; and being only symbols of a fact or doctrine, not its perfect utterance, they must, in modern times, be infinitely less impressive than the open Bible to an intelligent, sound-minded devotee. Impression from such signs, and from mechanical mementoes, might appear to indicate a state of mind not altogether sound. Those only who are out of health are inwardly affected by the sight of an apothecary’s symbols ; men of vigour recognize them only as abbreviations, to relieve the memory, and save some time.

The artistic and ‘religious’ use of what are called the sacred emblems is a constant source of clerical and popular delusion. The word ‘sacred’ is ambiguous, and may be either only technical, or essentially religious, in its meaning and its use. In mundane sciences such different meanings have their own expressive words ; a druggist’s labels are not said to be medicinal, but medical ; nor is the zodiac now declared to be celestial, but merely astronomical. The technically ‘sacred’ emblems have in modern use no greater sanctity than type in capitals, to indicate some title of the Deity ; they are a kind of hieroglyphic signs that were of use perhaps when people could not read ; but now they are the stock-in-trade of ‘sacred’ architects to supplement their absolute artistic incapacity, and serve instead of true artistic work. The constant exhibition of these common forms has no religious influence, but only tends to make the world believe that ‘art, as ‘ministering to religion,’ is a composite of trivialities. The progress of religious knowledge has deprived these cabalistic signs of any possible utility ; the doctrine signified is better understood than the recondite emblems ; and in the public eye an ‘altar’ with its reredos and ‘impressive’ symbolism is allied with the insignia that conjurors and wizards use to impress their wondering spectators. To all well-instructed, thoughtful minds, such base employment and association of the emblems of our Lord’s last Passover and passion are at once revolting and profane.

Proceeding then to architecture, we are told that churches, abbeys, and cathedrals are 'religious art,' and so in the artistic kingdom are superior. These religious buildings are, however, in their art entirely secular; their uses are religious, but the art that made them for their use is non-religious. The men who do the work are very seldom more religious than the common world, and all their building-work is purely mundane. A fine church may be in dignity and beauty an appropriate scene for great religious congregations, and for devotion manifested publicly in prayer and praise; but this gives no religion to the art that made the building. Worship is not vicarious; and all that the devoutest congregation can achieve in public service will not make the art that built the church religious.

Still, many a church is solemnly impressive, and is felt to elevate and dignify the mind; but these effects are not religiousness. The feelings and the sentiments are simply human; yet they are not to be accounted 'of the world.' Humanity in modern times has in the way of art become so totally debased; society has, owing to its unwise degradation of the workman, the sole source of art, become so mean in all its outward and material displays, that the old medieval workmen's art may well appear to persons in superior society to be 'impressively' above the level of their aspirations and association. The noblest efforts of imaginative art always impress by their affinity with what we know of the Creator's mind, and by their harmony with His own glorious works. The choir at Westminster must be an impressive scene to every man who has not had his sense of dignity in human handiwork entirely stamped out by the determined rush of folly that delights the richer classes of the present day; but the impression is not in the slightest sense religious. All the medieval work which now it is so much the fashion to admire in churches and cathedrals is but the remnant or memento of an art entirely secular, and which, when working men were not degraded, was ubiquitous and universal.

A church or a cathedral may of course be popularly called religious, since it has been built for and specially devoted to religious uses, and conforms to the routine of clerical devotion. But, with all this high ecclesiastical conformity, no religious building has a sacred influence; or, for instance, has been known to cause a publican to pray for mercy, or induced a swindling bankrupt to devote his life and energies to honest restitution. These are low tests, perhaps, but yet of very general application; and such good results, if they existed, might be quickly ascertained.

And yet the world is not, in practice, inconsistent when it calls church architecture of the modern type religious. Its own faith is distinctly in the money power; and as this power is the guide, the most efficient motive, and the acknowledged patron of society, its demonstrations, grossly inartistic, are accepted as a providence; and every luxurious environment is held to be at once a gift from, and a tribute to, the ruling deity. In furniture, and dress, and house, and equipage, the god of money rules; and when, in church, the trash that architects of eminence display seems to have cost much money, its 'religious' character becomes apparent to society both clerical and lay. Here then we have the true 'religious art,' the art of luxury, and not of mind; and here we find a popular religion that may have what Dr. Plumptre says is an 'aesthetic side.' In reference to true religion and to art the expression is absurd, but it is well suited for the architectural design and decoration of King's College Chapel. The idea that such common manufacture is religious, would be open to well-founded ridicule. It happens that a tradesman had instructions thus to daub the place where certain students say their prayers; and if this accident of place gives the trade decoration a 'religious side,' another tradesman equally has laid religious water-pipes to heat the place withal.

In painting also there is no religious side. A picture may be made to represent ideally events in sacred history, but it

has no religious influence on the mind, nor is the painter able to express religious sentiment or motive in the human countenance. Religion does not show itself in facial expression;\* it has pleased Heaven in this respect to shield the heart of man from human eye; and the religious nature of each son of man is visible to God alone, who is his judge. The sentiments of godly life are therefore inexpressible and unexpressed by the spontaneous and uncontrollable revolt of facial muscles. Thus a man’s religion becomes evident to others only by his voluntary act; he can address the Almighty publicly in speech, or he can demonstrate religious feeling by beneficence to men, but with his God his prayers may always be in secret.

For merely human sentiments there are abundant means of facial utterance, but the religious sentiment is totally expressionless. If we suppose a woman in an agony of fear striving to pray, we feel at once that as she prays the agony subsides, and a subduing influence, a half or totally abstracted calm, brings all the features into order, and the face is firm and serious, and free from sadness. Were it otherwise, the prayer would evidently be untrue, a cry of fear, revealing torment; but true prayer, the prayer of faith, is calm and confident; it makes man godlike.

The Greek sculptors fully recognised this sacred quality of quietude and calm; and so to all their statues of the gods they gave an aspect of supreme and serious, powerful repose. This constant principle of ancient art was doubtless reasoned out before it was established. The subjective calm resulting from habitual converse with the Deity may have induced the ancient carvers to believe that such repose was but a

\* ‘A humble kneeling posture, with the hands upturned and palms joined, appears to us, from long habit, a gesture so appropriate to devotion that it might be thought to be innate; but I have not met with any evidence to this effect with the various extra-European races of mankind. It is not probable that either the uplifting of the eyes, or the joining of the open hands under the influence of devotional feelings, are innate or truly expressive actions.’ (Darwin, ‘Expression of the Emotions,’ pp. 220, 221).

reflex of the quality that most distinguished the unseen, superior influences that exerted such an all-subduing power in the minds of men.

The medieval and renaissance painters strove to make their saints look pious, but the result was only a grimace. The drooping eyelid and the head leaning on one side, together giving very much the expression of a goose, were an accepted token of religiousness ; and from the unnatural upward straining of the eyes it seemed that heaven lay for each holy person through his *os frontis*. Such torture of the features was the mark of ecstasy ; and worldly people, witnessing the ocular condition of the saints, might well be thankful for the intercession and vicarious experience of the subjects of such painful sanctity. This strange, grotesque achievement in the field of art is due to clerical demand ; it is essentially the 'religious' element, or the ecclesiastical ; the former title being mere pretence, the latter indicating the true origin of the absurdity.

This sort of thing it is that makes unlearned, inexperienced men regard a specimen of what is called religious art as something of a mystery, apart from reason, and a thing to be accepted reverently as revealing the impossible. But true art is simple and veracious ; and men strong in art have generally saved themselves from clerical exaggeration. Being satisfied to hold the truth, and keep within artistic possibilities, they manifest religiousness, as it can only be discovered to our human observation, by the outward act ; and, even without incident or action, the Sistine Madonna, with her straight, simple outlook, and her two full eyes, is more suggestive of religiousness and heaven than the Saint Catherine at Trafalgar Square, with her distorted glance, and the conventional and pious droop of head.

The fallacy about religiousness in art is principally due to the pernicious patronage that clerics have for several centuries been wont to exercise, or to direct. Under this in-

fluence the old painters, down to Raphael, tried very hard and perseveringly to get some evidence of godliness into the features of their godly men. They had for many years been widening and elevating the capabilities of art; they had discovered how to give expression to the face, but had not ascertained the natural limit of this power; and so, in striving to extend it, they became grotesque.

In later times the ecstatic style of painting was a common manufacture of church furniture, an appropriate exhibition of the ‘ecclesiastical element’ or ‘the religious side of art.’ The Bolognese eclectic school of painting, with its ‘Ecce ‘Homos’ and Madonnas, its pictorial drivel about Saint Sebastian and Saint Francis, furnishes abundant specimens of this bad work; and in the clerico-religious world no class of pictures has been more in vogue.

In pictures that profess to represent in a poetic way events in Scripture history, our Saviour often is a necessary figure for the action of the piece; but this gives no religious life or influence to the work. A man might gaze for half his life on pictures of the ‘Crucifixion,’ and be totally insensible of any love for Christ or gratitude for His great sacrifice, His holy teaching, and His perfect life. Such pictures, and the plays at Ober-Ammergau, are the poetic records or mementoes of historical events. There may be mental influence in the painter’s subtle skill, or in the actor’s passionate impersonation, but this influence is entirely undevotional and non-religious. There is a proper mental interest and sympathy and admiration for the able artist, but what is taken for religious sentiment is a vibration only of the nerves, which, as in fright, or in recovery from fear, has no persistent spiritual influence. The shock is held in memory only, not in heart; and even if some tears should flow, they are, ‘as tears shed at a tragedy: before the curtain has well fallen they are dried up, and the heart remains where it was.’ To those, however, who enact the various parts of the dramatic scene, or

do the work of painting, such religious plays and pictures may be made a noble stimulus. The seriousness and the solemnity of scriptural incidents are the extreme removes from scenes and sentiments of vanity and vice, and are a pure and dignified association for the mind of the devoted artist. This is their only excellence; and until it can be shown that the custodians of the chief galleries of religious art grow marvellously in grace under the influence of their charge, it would be well to end the trifling with a word of serious import, and to restrict the word ‘religious’ to its natural use and proper meaning.

But there are pictures of another class, in which there is an absolute inversion of the principle of art. The painter has no care for, no devotion to his art; his only care is that the religious sentiment, and art, shall be devoted and subservient to himself. In pictures of this class the sacred subject is not made an elevating influence, a stimulus for dignified artistic phantasy; these works of ‘sacred art’ are but trade clap-traps made to catch the silly, sanctimonious multitude, and to induce them foolishly to pay their monetary tribute to the shrewd artificer, or to some enterprising speculator in artistic wares. This is the almost universal type; it is a manufacture, done entirely in the spirit of the age; we are a manufacturing people.

At Doré’s Bond Street show-rooms of ‘religious art’ is an extensive picture, called ‘Christ leaving the Praetorium.’ This greatly advertised presentment is an unmeaning show of clothes, and heads, and limbs, without a semblance of constructive or dramatic power, a breath of creative imagination, a sentiment of beauty, or an element of grace. There is no light and shade, but only foggy dulness and obscurity, and colouring that rivals London in November. In the centre of the picture is a frail slender figure with a feeble face; not sorrowful, but only pitiable, for its misery is evidently due to weakness more than to affliction. This poor

figure has been dressed in white, after the manner of a melodrama ; and, that it may be prominently seen, the fog has cleared away just at the proper time and place. Remove the crown of thorns, and make the venue upon Ramsgate sands, and this 'religious' figure is a lady bather, pale, and in a state of feeble nervous desperation, as she gingerly steps down into the sea ; or add some flowers to the crown, and we might recognise Ophelia, or, with becoming dress, the Lucia of the operatic stage. The value of the picture is entirely in the name : that is 'religious,' and the religious world, who know the name of Christ, are gratified to see a form which they are told ideally describes Him. Their uneducated, inartistic senses are entranced and charmed by the weak, washy-looking whiteness of the figure ; and as they find it pleasantly mysterious, and incomprehensible, and strange, they are 'impressed ;' and so their visit half consoles them for the piously-forbidden, though more innocent, delights of an Adelphi melodrama or a spectacular Shakesperian play. All that is wanting is a startling terror, like the unexpected movement of the Commandatore or Hermione ; and a soft, sympathetic, nervous tremolo of muffled harps and muted violins.

In a neighbouring gallery there also used to be exhibited a 'marvellous picture,' called 'The Shadow of Death ;' and in the 'history of the picture' we were told with what great pains the artist had, literally, gone about to make a work that should most accurately represent 'the Son and Daughter of the House of David.' Of course these individualities are in some manner realised in every mental portrait gallery ; and in a painting where the outward life and personality of Christ are said to be the ruling elements, and the foundation of the work, it might be expected that an enduring energy of mind and nerve would be in some way indicated in His outward form. But in the figure Mr. Hunt has drawn there is no energy of body or of mind ; the lower limbs are muscular, and yet the pose and movement are so feeble and

devoid of will as to suggest paralysis ; the slender arms are not in action, but are spreading heedlessly in space, without intention or control ; the face is equally devoid of energy, intelligence, and human sympathy. Never were mental weakness and the absolute deficiency of moral power more ably shown ; fallen humanity could have little hope from such a delicate and dainty personage. The forty days and forty nights of wandering in the wilderness, and the effective power of will and limb experienced by the money-changers, are entirely inconsistent with this feeble presence. This, then, is not the Christ ; the eyes of all would never have been fastened on an aspect such as this ; here is no possibility of any Saviour of the world ; no one would put his trust in such a paragon of imbecility.

The whole figure is the very opposite of the historic Christ. The Saviour could have been no pretty weakling ; but, as a man destined to sorrow, He would be firm of countenance, with majesty, and power, and gentleness united in His aspect. His eyes would not be soft and weak, and full of self-complacency, but bright, beaming with active sympathy for human nature, and capable of insight into power as well as into weakness. His mouth and lips, ‘taught by the wisdom of ‘His heart,’ would be finely moulded, for the utterance of ‘gracious words’ or of most bitter scorn. His frame and constitution must have been exceptionally strong, and His arms muscular, for He was known as an efficient workman, not a makebelieve—‘The carpenter’ whom all could recognise, a Man whom fasting, sorrow, and all human care, could not break down. We have no record of a failure of His health or energy ; he could sleep soundly in a storm at sea, and would rise up a ‘a great while before day’ or ‘continue all night in ‘prayer ;’ and at the end, the day of triumph, the long night of watching, and the thrice-repeated trial were passed through without apparently a moment’s rest. Yet at the very last His mind was clear, His self-possession was maintained, and

thus His thoughtfulness for others was supreme. ‘Woman, ‘behold thy son;’ and then, ‘Behold thy mother,’ were considered and expressed before ‘I thirst.’ This, it is clear, is not the man that Mr. Hunt has painted; by the title of the picture it would seem that his chief care has been about the shadow, not with the impersonation, and he thus has sacrificed substantial effort for a very shadowy success.

If we then turn to Mary, who at the time when Jesus ‘began to be about thirty years of age,’ must have been from forty-five to fifty, and in figure and complexion an old woman; poor and a widow, she would probably have dressed with studious sobriety. But the unwrinkled arm and beautifully moulded hands of this young figure indicate the age of budding, blooming womanhood; and thus the mother seems, and so pictorially is, the junior of the son. The ivory chest and golden crown are curious solecisms; the Wise Men would hardly bring a full-sized crown to offer to a baby king. Their offering was of course in currency, acceptable by king and by the humblest occupant of the inn stable; and, as a delicate refinement, frankincense and myrrh were added, in the true oriental, courtly, customary way. The gold was doubtless promptly used to purchase household comforts, or for sustenance in Egypt, and not made the worship and encumbrance of a life. Such hoarding would have been entirely inconsistent with Christ’s doctrine about business and benevolence. He would not leave the treasure in a box for thirty years, but would have ‘put it with ‘the exchangers, that at his coming,’—on demand,—‘he might ‘have received his own with usury;’ or, still more likely, would have lovingly addressed to Mary His Divine but ‘sorrowful’ command, ‘Go sell that thou hast, and distribute to the poor.’

The ‘coffer,’ with its veil or silken drapery, and its wonderful contents, is quite sufficient to destroy all claim to make this scene an episode in the pre-missionary life of Christ; the picture is indeed a strong negation of its own reported

incident and aim. As to the Shadow, this young gentlewoman would not be so easily distracted from her mammon worship by a noiseless apparition ; nor would she in a moment recognise its fleeting form ; nor yet again connect its inconsistent outline with the notion of a figure on a cross.

It seems that Mr. Hunt has fallen into the very common error of esteeming art to be didactic. ‘The primary object of Art,’ his pamphlet says, ‘is to teach the lesson of the ‘incident pourtrayed.’’ But art can teach no lesson, save that it cannot teach ; in whatever kind of handiwork teaching begins there art ends ; the two things may be mingled in one work, as in an illuminated volume, but they are then alternate exhibitions, not combined and mutually transfused essences ; the pictures are not teachings, but illuminations, which illustrate or throw light upon the teaching. Mr. Hunt we must prefer to call an artist, not a teacher ; he can express himself in colour and in form with vigour, carefulness, and beauty ; but as an archæologist his show of detail, which he seems to call his teaching, is grotesque, and as a homilist the doctrine of his pamphlet is degrading and unsound. ‘The picture,’ it is said, ‘should be its own expositor,’ and then there follow forty pages of elaborate exposition, which reveal in every word the artist’s failure to expound. The picture is not, as it seems that many fear, in any ‘danger of vulgarising truth by ‘realism ;’ it is essentially *unreal*. There are some properties most carefully described, just as, in words, a mechanician might recite them for a patent ; but this gives no realism to the picture ; on the contrary, it must be evident that the pictorial prominence, and the importance given to the tools, destroys reality. No one in presence of humanity and life would, were his mind at ease, have casual instruments of handicraft impressed so strongly on his mind that their strict portraiture should be essential to the memory and recognition of the scene. All these details do not produce artistic realism ; they are only curiosities, pictorial toys, which rank in art

with little models of mechanical contrivances that charm small children; or at most they are an object lesson, or a diagram, with no ideal or imaginative art.

But art when truly realistic is not abjectly mechanical. The imagination is employed to regulate the scene, to give each object its due, relative importance, and to bring some character and sentiment into the picture. But this Shadow picture has no character or sentiment at all. The pamphlet and some petty, babyish contrivances together make it understood that there is something meant by all the show; without these aids, the idea that these two inconsistent figures are the Christ and Mary is the last that would occur to the spectator's mind. The man in no sense represents the 'Christ in full man-hood, enduring the burden of common toil;' he is 'not gaining His bread by the sweat of His face;' and there is nothing in the picture that exhibits either 'the dignity of labour' or 'the duty of the workman.' The man is lazy and incapable, negligent of duty, vain, feeble-minded, and undignified.

The 'marvellous' figure then is not the Christ. This we may say at once, to save the printer from a charge of typographical irreverence; and, dropping the prophetic name, 'The carpenter' is clearly not a real working man. His shop is quite untradesmanlike; the shavings are not whisked away from his chief place of movement; there is no 'sweat upon his face,' no powdering of sawdust on his beard and linen cloth. His attitude is not the vigorous station of a man just resting from his handiwork for relaxation, or, as some pretend, 'for prayer.' In either case the feet would be apart, to give a wider base; the arms would be stretched out or thrown aloft with animated impulse; and the calm, confident, determined face would be an index of the workman's nervous energy, or of that power in faith and works that gives the suppliant commanding power in prayer. But here there is no confidence or power at all, but only whining feebleness; the features, the expression, and the figure being by the artist well

assorted and combined. The feet and legs are overlapped as if one foot were suffering from a splinter or a thorn, and so the figure has a wounded and unstable look, and, as the brainless head has gone wool-gathering, will surely fall. The arms and hands are posed, quite incorrectly, to suggest a crucifixion, and the head inclines a little, and the fingers crumple down to aid the imitation. This condition of the fingers is attributed to cramp from strenuous work, which proves the man to be no carpenter at all. Only a novice at the tools would suffer from such muscular contraction ; the hands of every working carpenter show perfect flexibility. Still, any man that used the handle which our artist has invented for a ‘pulling’ saw would find his fingers very much in difficulty ; the queer handle evidently will *not* pull ; there is no hold or grip for pulling motion. This may possibly account for the small quantity of work that has been done, and for the readiness to give up work ‘for prayer’ before the brow and the neat figure had become defiled with dust or perspiration. The strange ‘pulling saw,’ and the ‘religious side’ of our sham workman’s art are however but a blind ; the man has nothing of the workman’s method and experience ; the board is placed the wrong way on the stool. A real workman would have trailed the timber *from* the door on to the stool, so that the sun would be behind him, and the window light in front ; and not, quite needlessly, have brought the timber past the stool, and then turned round to work with the low-setting sun directly in his eyes. Moreover, ‘at the hour of evening prayer,’ he would have had his right hand, not his left hand, next the saw ; the carpenter is clearly an impostor.

So much for the chief figure in the group. The woman—we can give no name—is admirably drawn ; and, also ‘at the time of evening prayer,’ is worshipping the gold—a politic appeal to British sympathy. Her ivory coffer is a miracle in ivory ware ; carved, it is said, ‘in imitation of a capital at Persepolis ;’ a strange original for ivory carving. The

lining of the box, and what is called the 'veil,' are bright and clean as if just made, which is suspicious; and the fact of so much wealth in metal and in art appearing in an open shop, supposed to be a carpenter's, seems to suggest inquiry. These are the obvious facts; but we are told that while the woman was engaged in 'worship,' or examining the box and its contents, her rapt attention was distracted by the fleeting shadow on the wall, 'The Shadow of the Cross.' The rail and rack of tools have, it is true, been cleverly arranged *cross-wise*; but yet the shadow would suggest no thought or notion of a crucifixion, where the arms would be quite straight and tense, not curved and loose, like those belonging to this 'Shadow,' not 'of Death,' but, on the contrary, of very easy life.

Again, the mark upon the wall is actually not a shadow, but a stain. The effect of shadow at that distance is not to obliterate the softer local colour, but to reveal it. In bright sunlight tender colour is made indistinct by the sharp cross reflections of the multitudinous irregularities of surface; and we practically find that when such tints are nearly worn away, they are most easily discovered under a shadow. The want of adequate penumbra is another evidence that Mr. Hunt is hardly well versed in sciology.

The outline then is not a shadow, but a fictitious semblance made to please the childish public. It supplies a dismal, and sensational, and sanctimonious name to a production which is meant for 'the religious side' of the 'art' market. The idea is similar in value and effect to that of 'Pepper's Ghost,' or of the 'Rabbit on the Wall'; but in merit and completeness it is much below the one, and, in simplicity and truthful innocence, inferior to the other.

Its influence, whatever this may be, is solely bad. It lowers sacred subjects, and the associations of religion, to the level of a galanti-show; and makes its solemn verities the light amusement, or the spasmodic stimulant, of the most trivial-minded portion of mankind. No sadder sight has

recently been seen than the deluded gazers who from noon to evening filled the gallery to stare at, and become ‘impressed’ by, this so greatly advertised and ‘marvellous painting.’

The book of explanation confidently says that ‘the picture tells its own tale.’ The tale ‘the Shadow’ tells us is an obvious and very foolish fiction. But if we clear the picture of the shadow trick, what kind of story will it then suggest? The unprompted and intelligent beholder, when considering the picture, would at once become aware of something wrong. The figures and the properties are inconsistent. The shop would soon be felt to be a sham; but, on the other hand, the crown of gold and the enamel cloisonné are evident realities. These are the woman’s care; but how did she become possessed of such a treasure? Like a quick-witted woman, she is conscious of the natural inquiry, and her face is sharply turned away. Who is she? Evidently not the mother of the seeming carpenter. Her bejewelled, beautifully rounded arm; her well-conditioned, exquisitely graceful form, an effort of the painter’s art fit to arouse the jealousy of Raphael when at his best; her dainty dress, not modestly subdued in colour into seeming sympathy with widowhood, but studiously bright and gay, all tell a tale quite different from the lesson that the picture is supposed to teach. The woman cannot be the sorrowing and dependent mother of the man; her age, whatever be their possible relationship, is certainly not greater than that of her companion. And then her active figure; her firm arms and hands, speaking of will and resolution to the fingers’ ends; and her intelligence and promptitude to find a plausible excuse to screen her face, make it quite evident that of the pair she is the mistress, and that the feeble-minded youth is but a parasite, an abject tool. His well-developed lower limbs might on occasion suit a Mercury; his drapery and waistband show the woman’s influence and pretty taste; the upper limbs, and the light, unenduring frame are fit for active promptitude, but not for

work. Those arms and hands have never been the honest sole dependence of this well-conditioned pair; work with this carpenter is mere pretence, a much needed, but an insufficient covering for his ignominy. His weak, zany face is full of self-complacency and affectation, destitute of sterling character; a proper climax to a figure that is all to pieces, a complete presentment of a moral ruin, naked, but not ashamed; a very 'marvellous picture.'

Nothing more, religiously, pernicious could be undertaken than the general dispersion throughout England of engravings of this work; its chief tendency would be to vilify the Saviour in the eyes of men. The Romish clergy made Him in their 'sacred' pictures everything that is describable of human weakness, 'a sheep,' exclusively intended 'for the slaughter'; and this painting, by its 'teaching,' could but serve to justify the Jews, and to explain, with creditable reason, the historic fact that Jesus 'was rejected and despised of men.'

A Christ is quite beyond the reach of art; the finite and restricted human mind and hand cannot efficiently describe Divinity in human form. The old artists, Fra Angelico and Francia and others, made their Christs impassionate abstractions, limitedly human, since they could not reach the humanly divine. They never thought of painting Jesus 'as He actually 'lived; but, with a lyric or factitious sentiment, they either truthfully pourtrayed their own ideal of a sacred person or a sacred scene, or they adopted the conventional and ecclesiastical idea, and then used their artistic faculty to illustrate the clerico-historic theme; their art was fanciful, and not religious.

But though a painting is no act of faith, nor doctrinal, nor yet dogmatic, it arouses sympathy with the accomplished truthful artist as a workman; this is its object. Art is in its origin divine; its spirit brings the workman into apposition with the Almighty Worker, and we are led to glorify the heavenly Creator while rejoicing in His mundane emanation. This is the religious opportunity of art: by noble, loving

sympathy it leads men into glorious association ; and as they recognise the claim of true imaginative work, they reverence and love the workman, and are thus by human ‘charity’ raised above ‘faith’ and ‘hope.’ If art is verily didactic, then, of course, ‘religious’ pictures should be multiplied to teach and to convert the sinning world ; and copies should be promptly furnished to the City Prison and the Stock Exchange.

Religion is not taught by painted semblances of Christ, but by the word and work of Christ Himself, which men refuse to make their study and example. Instead of this they listen with a dilettante air while connoisseurs discourse of ‘the ‘religious side of art,’ and of its wonderful ‘impressiveness.’ And yet no sacred picture has been known to publicly convince the world of sin ; nor do our connoisseurs and pharisees turn into humble suppliants when studying a Fra Angelico ; nor have we heard it said that students at King’s College, London, have become entirely Christian through the influence of the paint upon their chapel walls.

But Mr. Hunt is not to be another illustration of the ‘scape-goat.’ Though expressly striving to develop a new method, and a canon of his own, he has been naturally influenced by the clerical art theory and pattern of the Christ. The old painters of religious subjects were employed almost exclusively on behalf of, or entirely by, the Church, and consequently were in great subordination to the ecclesiastical demand for orthodoxy in the things of art. The great prevailing dogma of ‘the Church’ was that in all things spiritual, and in many things beside, the superior clergy were the divinely instituted, active rulers of mankind. This meant, of course, the meek docility of all the laity ; and so when ‘saints,’ and even Christ, are set before the world as our examples, they are depicted as entirely gentle, unimpulsive, and submissive, both in mind and manner. The energy of human life is little recognised in the artistic hagiology of Christendom ; and though great original designers like Masaccio,

and Michael Angelo, Mantegna, Veronese, and Tintoret, had strength of character and mind enough to disregard the sacred fashion, the majority of painters, whether pious, delicate, and lyric, like Angelico, or disbelieving, manufacturing, and refined, like Perugino, made their saints a feeble race of nerveless and eviscerated men and women ; and their Christs were similarly abstract, self-compassionate, and non-natural.

Such transcendental forms were very safe as mental models for enthusiasts and devotees, who were instructed that the imbecile condition of the saints was really one of exaltation, and that heaven became directly open to humanity thus travestied. This was the method and development of what is now called ‘Christian Art ;’ the Man Christ Jesus had to be obliterated from the minds of men whose duty is to honour Him by manly imitation, and in His stead we have some sentimental and insipid notions of a demigod. But Christ was Godliness Incarnate ; His humanity was not a screen or non-essential covering ; He was thoroughly of human kind, ‘tempted in all points like as we,’ and also active, resolute, and self-asserting. He assumed no look of outward meekness : on the contrary, He gave full utterance to His zealous indignation, to His manly spirit of rebuke and scorn. He had, it seems, to tell the world that He was ‘meek and lowly *in heart*,’ since possibly His energetic, active zeal, His vigorous use of means, and His sarcastic eloquence, might sometimes have obscured or hidden this less obvious feature of His character. The task that Mr. Hunt has undertaken is beyond the scope of human fancy and perceptive thought. A tempted, sinless, energetic teacher and reformer of mankind transcends the moral and expressive capabilities of art.

All that we now have written is in strict relation to our subject, and entirely apart from any question of the artist’s merit as a painter, which is great, and will no doubt be greater. An accomplished artist, like a well-equipped and sturdy traveller, may be misled ; and, wandering in byways,

may fall into a maze of error. A man of sense, who finds himself thus circumstanced, will promptly put himself again on the right road; this Mr. Hunt can surely do. He probably has lost his way by listening to misleading talk about ‘religious art;’ having yet to learn that art is sympathetic, not religious, and that a painter’s proper object, and his evidence of power, is the command of human sympathy; his rank depending on the quality of sympathy and mind that he can influence. Those that most highly value Mr. Hunt’s display of ‘Shadow’ are of an inferior type and quality; people whose views of art are not in fact ‘religious,’ as they seem to think, but only sanctimonious. In the shop windows may be seen a coloured drawing of a woman in a night-dress, hanging to a clumsy cross of stone, with seeming waves about her, all miraculously dry; this is, ‘religiously,’ the artistic fellow to our ‘Shadow,’ possibly more weak, and even more absurd, but far less impious and tricky.

The painting fails in the essential qualities that go to make a picture; it wants powerful and simple manly thought, and dignified imagination. This briefly and regretfully must be admitted; but it is grateful, also, to recount and treasure the abundant excellences in the technical performance of the work. The draughtsmanship is thorough, and the lower portion of the picture, from the right-hand corner up to the angle of the coffer lid, is exquisitely painted. The little landscape is a pleasant outlook, and arouses an impatient wish that the pretended carpenter, his work, and tools, would, like a shadow, disappear, so that from the window we might thoroughly enjoy the scene. The figure of the woman is perfection realised, the drapery is graceful in its fold, distinctive in its texture, and superb in colour. The perspective is perhaps a little faulty, or the shavings may confuse the various distances; and aërial perspective has not been employed as an efficient substitute for the unconscious, undetected parallax of human two-eyed sight. But these are minor failings; and the painter

who can do such work as we have pointed out is sadly wasted when his time is occupied for years on painful nonsense like this questionable carpenter, and the sham solemnity that desecrates the wall.

We would yet venture on another word of thoroughly respectful commendation, and of friendly warning. Mr. Hunt, in one respect, is very much distinguished from the great majority of his contemporaries. His pictures are not evidently a manufacture, made especially to sell ; they do not seem at home in a Royal Academy Exhibition ; they would not associate conveniently with the latest style of millinery by Millais, or with top-boots by Grant. There are, of course, painters of various character, as well as various merit ; some men, in dignified contentment, make their fortune ; others, ‘ of the baser sort,’ would make their fortune by the sacrifice of art.

‘ With some she is the goddess great,  
‘ With some the milch cow of the field ;  
‘ Their aim is but to calculate  
‘ What butter she will yield.’

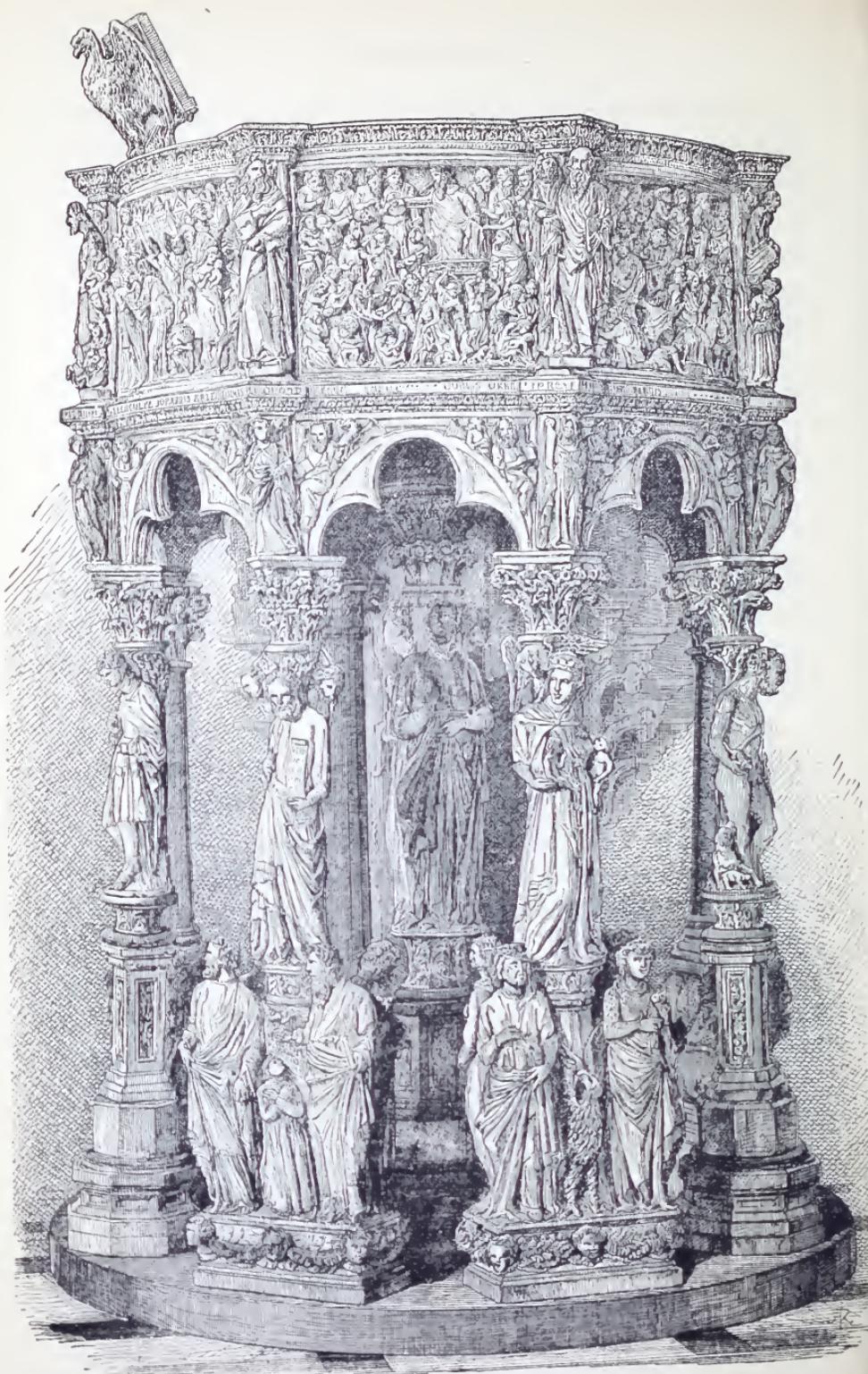
Mr. Hunt must be included in the former class ; but he has, unfortunately for his artistic reputation and his possible career, become connected with the picture speculators ; and no bad communication is more likely to corrupt an able artist. The commercial object of a speculator is, by using up a well-known name, to gain for his artistic wares a ‘ marvellous’ sale in the wide market of inferior people of all ranks and classes ; and to this end the man of name is tempted to degrade his art, and make it suit the prevalent commercial fashion. A curious collector of bad specimens of art might be directed in his choice by records of commissions given by the picture-dealers, and by speculators in what are called ‘ subscription, proof engravings.’ If a true artist condescends to manufacture ‘ art’ to make his fortune, he can scarcely rise above the level of his aim.

A thoughtful painter should reject the incubus of merely monetary patronage, and should select his patrons, like his pigments, with especial care; working for no one for mere pay, nor without perfect sympathy. All men, just as all women, have their suitable admirers; and the assumption of a proper status by the artist would soon terminate the present system of promiscuous venality, which has almost ruined art.

In modern English architecture the display of ‘the æsthetic side of culture and religion’ is similarly questionable. The trades of draughtsmanship and contract building, and the drudging work of artisans, have recently exhibited a measureless amount of ‘piety.’ But it seems strange that these ‘religious works of art’ should be so very bad; being religious, they should at least be true. Yet, as a fact, they are invariably false; not art at all, but only manufacture. They fail in the essential quality of art; they yield no delight to the artificer, making ‘his soul enjoy good in his labour.’

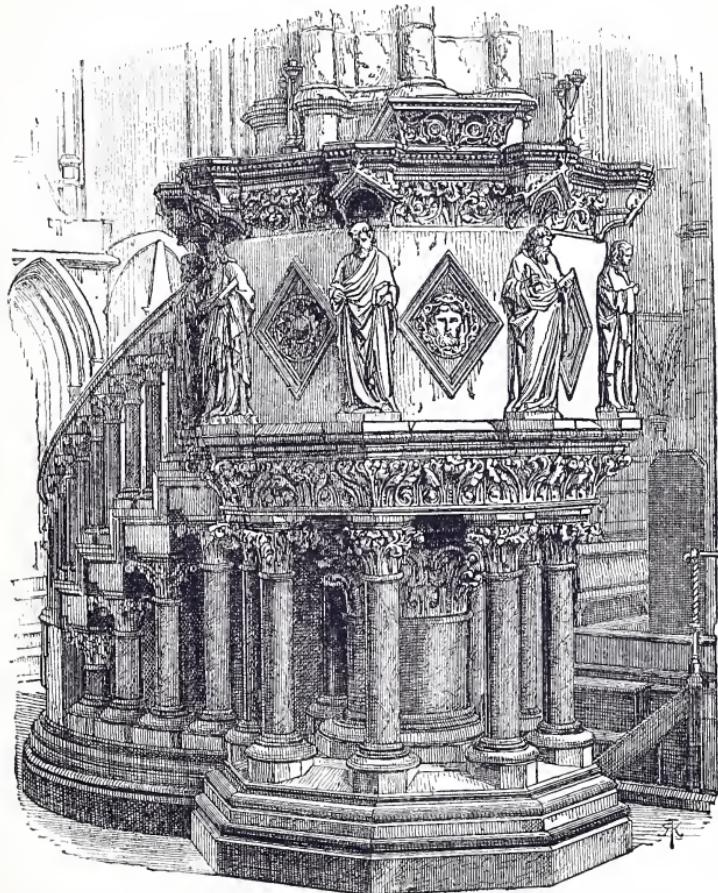
The Abbey Church at Westminster is generally quoted as our chief national museum of ‘religious art.’ The term is purely modern; medieval workmen never understood that what they wrought was ‘sacred;’ but, on the contrary, believed that it required consecration by the priest. Without regarding therefore such acknowledged irreligious work, let us make a passing survey of the Abbey; and consider how the religious and artistic skill of modern architects has been displayed in that afflicted building.

First, there are the towers that Sir Christopher designed, and then the equally successful work at the north transept; but these are things that we were born to, and for them we suffer no remorse. We enter from the west, and the choir-screen faces us; a carefully composed design, by a neat draughtsman; feeble, and somewhat scholarly. On our left is a new pulpit of the coarsest speculating manufacture, having nothing of the cultivated workman’s art and dignified imagination. As a substitute for these, the commonplace



IMAGINATIVE ART, AT PISA, BY A 'FAMOUS WORKMAN.'

and minor accidents of medieval pulpits have been unintelligently copied, and are made the leading features of the work. Monotonously moulded shafts and plinths and bases, showy capitals, extravagantly disproportioned ‘handsome’ cornices, unmeaning canopies, and paltry statuettes, all technically known as ‘church-work’ in the trade, are introduced to screen



PROFESSIONAL ‘RELIGIOUS ART’ AT WESTMINSTER.

and to divert the eye from the distinguished drawing-master’s incapacity. The pulpit proper ought, of course, to be the subject of the highest workmanship and art, but here a meagre shell, on which a few crude panels set up lozenge-wise are introduced to give some childish notion of original design, is the true pulpit, and the incongruous details, which give

painful emphasis to its impoverishment, are only adjuncts. Then, the lozenges are filled, to order, with inferior mosaic work, in one compartment with a poor ill-looking face, surrounded by the tradesman's ignorant suggestion of a wreath of thorns; and though the work is thus undoubtedly 'religious art,' it is, to quote its nominal designer's comprehensive phrase, 'a national disgrace.' The woodwork in the choir is perfectly correct and commonplace; the architectural forms were doubtless drawn in detail by an office clerk, and then the carver cut the wood, in miserable weariness. Around the choir is some expensive metal-work of no artistic value; but it was furnished by a tradesman of respectability.

Still going eastward, on the left another pulpit stands; it has no merit save that it pretends to none; in which it is contrasted by the new 'altar,' or communion-table, with its reredos, and the recent restoration of the altar-screen. The 'altar-table' is a nondescript absurdity, for as an altar it is ill designed, and as a table quite impracticable. The top is marble, as becomes an altar; and below are ornamental shafts, as imitation table-legs. Between these legs are carvings of the Fall, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, and some little images of saints: all ignominiously placed under the table, and just level with the lower limbs of the officiating priest. This matters little, for the real object of the 'altar' front is not religious or artistic dignity, but sumptuous and fashionable ornament, for which the most appalling and momentous incidents in sacred history are used as stock-in-trade. The manufacturers who supply these goods would be amused to hear their produce gravely called 'religious art.'

Above the 'altar' is a picture of our Lord's Last Supper, where the 'table and fair white linen cloth' are carefully designed, and 'proper;' as a protest possibly against the inconsistent hybrid structure placed below. The ancient screen behind the 'altar' has been recently restored, with parti-coloured alabaster, richly gilt, and so gives evidence of having

cost much money, which is, in works of art, the English test of value. The work is popular, and manifestly edifying ; those who have seen the line of devotees who after evening prayers cling to the railings, and there gaze with wondering eyes, must have observed the powerful ‘religious’ influence of the sumptuous display. The place is one of worship truly, and the god is Mammon ; and as each pilgrim tells with bated breath the glories of the shrine, he bows in mental degradation.\*

The reredos is the highly ornamental picture in mosaic, manufactured at Murano, and enframed with coloured marbles and half-precious stones. This costly trumpery is held to exemplify the ‘Lamp of Sacrifice ;’ and we are told that of our best we should make offering to God. The sacrificial doctrine is quite true, and only misapplied ; our best and only needful offering to God is His own image, that He made to stand, immortal, in His presence, not the dirt that He has sunk beneath the ground. David said truly and devoutly, ‘All ‘things come of thee, and of thine own have we given ‘thee ;’ but in David’s time how little was there known of God’s possessions. ‘Onyx stones and stones to be set ; ‘glistening stones, and of divers colours ; and all manner ‘of precious stones ; and marble stones in abundance,’ were a rich display of human enterprise and skill when David made

\* By the way, as incidental to our subject, three things may be mentioned : (1) That at the Reformation the word ‘altar’ in the Coronation Office having, by a single oversight, been uncorrected, the communion table in the Abbey is the only ‘altar’ ever, even nominally, recognised by the Established Church. (2) That in some English churches, by the 82nd canon, the communion table was ‘intended not to stand against the east wall at communion time :’ and the officiating minister stood before, or in another sense behind, the east side of the table, in a reasonable way, facing the congregation, just as the Pope still stands ‘behind’ the altar in the Vatican Basilica. (3) That altars were essentially, and first, the things on which religious sacrifices were consumed by fire ; and among the Hebrews, only the Mosaic altar of burnt offering, the fire on which was never to go out, could ‘sanctify all things thereon.’ But on the Anglican and Roman ‘altars’ no such constant holocaust is made ; they cannot therefore sanctify. Moreover, the unchristian doctrine, that the minister or priest renews the sacrifice, which the apostle Paul declared was offered ‘once for all’ upon the cross, has been, like ‘altars,’ specially rejected by the Church of England.

his offering. But now, long ages after David and his preparations for a 'palace for the Lord ;' thousands of years since Phidias and Callicrates ; centuries since the inspired works of Giotto the wall-painter, Francia 'Aurifex,' and Michael Angelo the carver ; after the boundless phantasy and the surpassing power of Tintoret, and the majestic splendour of Paul Veronese, all the results of God's 'own' inspiration, and thus fitting to be offered in His house, we have no better sacrifice to make than polished pebble stones and marble, coloured cubes of glass, and 'double gilding.' These are in fact no sacrifice at all ; the flashy bauble is 'wholly in the service of 'pleasure ;' and, like other pretty things devoid of noble sensibility, its chief object is to excite the wonder of the ignorant, and to gratify the sensual and the vain. But 'the Lord's 'portion is his people ;' our true offering is the living sacrifice, the cultivated, transformed mind of man, inspired to manifest in art the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

If, standing in the cross of his fine church, the Dean would study carefully the free, intelligently guided handiwork of the old masons, until he feels the power of inspiration in the 'lively stones,' and then glance to the reredos, he will find that in the latter is no art at all, but a commercial product of mechanical contrivances, precise, inflexible, and destitute of human feeling ; a conglomerate of minerals, the very emblems of stupidity. It is a copy only of a scheme on paper, made by some poor serving draughtsman, for the lavish sacrifice of money, as the greatest good, and so the nearest thing to God, within his comprehension.

Succumbing to the rising deluge of 'religious art,' the Abbey is, like almost all our churches, in a state of rapid obscuration ; and, entirely without reference to the requirements of the building, in a vain endeavour to prolong the egregious notoriety of certain commonplace but accidentally successful men, the windows of the nave are bleared with coloured glass. The subjects and the treatment are both equally

absurd ; pictures of viaducts and bridges, and of other scientific wonders of the world, are in such plenty that the church might be an annexe to the Institute of Civil Engineers. As a ‘religious art’ memorial of the officers and men and boys who perished in the ‘Captain,’ is exhibited a picture-show, illustrating among other things the legend of the prophet Jonah ; but how the petulant and conscience-stricken runaway, who so miraculously escaped from drowning, can be compared with those who were engulfed, and died, in the performance of their duty, needs the aid of inspiration to explain.

We wander to the Chapter-house, newly restored, and we remember that some years ago ‘the architect,’ exploring in the desolate warehouse for records, looked down a hole, and saw a head, and gleefully announced it in ‘The Times’ newspaper. This head and figure, and a corresponding statue, now stand perfectly revealed on each side of the entrance archway. The carving is appropriate, the drapery light, the figures slender and refined, enhancing the effect of power and solidity in the surrounding stonework. Above the arch no central figure was discovered ; and ‘religious art’ seizing the opportunity, we here see ‘restored,’ by what contractors know as ‘piece-work,’ a rude, block-headed, seated figure, careless in conception, androgynous in form, coarse in every feature, and graceless in every line ; its most obtrusive and impressive portions are the huge development of breast, and the thick mass of drapery that hangs about the knees. This is a ‘Majesty,’ and if there be an actual religious art, we here conversely have an art that is profane ; and in the central building of Protestant Christendom, the cradle of the House of Commons, under the guardianship of the Crown, at the expense of the nation, we thus find intruded among the old masons’ true, artistic work, a modern manufacturer’s job, an inartistic, irreligious effigy, too weak for dignity, and too dull to be grotesque.

At the reopening of the Chapter-house there was a polite

and hospitable gathering of connoisseurs and clerics, men of the 'Profession' and of Parliament, but not of those that did the work: there was no hint of any working masons being there. And yet the whole assembly was not in acumen, or artistically, worth the wages of the medieval carver that hewed out that pair of graceful figures at a workman's rate of pay; not one visitor or connoisseur that we have heard of could detect, and honestly denounce, the manifest imposture perched above the door. The cause of all this incapacity is obvious; our connoisseurs and clerics, destitute of wisdom or of cautious care, have put their trust in drawing clerks, or in padrones who farm the draughtsmen; and have habitually neglected and despised the artisan. The folly has its prompt and fitting punishment; throughout seven centuries the work of the old masons at the Abbey has remained as one of England's glories, but the new raree-show already loses credit and esteem; for as the glitter fades the wonder vanishes, and thus the grave regrets of men of sense will soon be supplemented by discerning ridicule.

These works have not been quoted as especially obnoxious or extreme, but, on the contrary, because they are of ordinary evil and delinquency. We purposely avoid extravagant examples, and entirely repudiate all personal and party feeling; our subject is not any doctrine of the Church, nor the capacity or otherwise of individual men, but what is called 'religious 'art';' and we have chosen for our illustrations works that seem to be most typical and popular. The Abbey is the best known illustration we could give of 'the æsthetic side of 'culture and religion,' free from obvious ritualistic inclinations, and dissociated from anything like mental weakness in the official guardians of the church.

The work of 'art-religion' goes apace. At Windsor the new reredos, beautified with heavy gilding, parti-coloured marble, and cheap jewellery, looks as if especially designed for a casino; and the old Tomb-house has been made to don

the spangles of a pantomime. The pretty reredoses at Gloucester, and at Worcester and Carlisle, are not art, but only fashion, and might easily be manufactured by the yard. These things have no religion in them, and can never have historic value as artistic monuments; they are in fact, though for the present not in popular perception, costly exhibitions of mere baby-mindedness; and when the public and the clergy have attained to manly sense and to intelligent maturity of knowledge in the things of art, this beautiful ‘religious’ rubbish will be carted ignominiously away.

The choir at Exeter is now quite clean and tidy; no enthusiastic chambermaid could hope to make a neater show. This is the customary token of ‘religious art;’ it ‘runs especially to neatness, which is the full completion of the ‘thing in hand;’ wherefrom a sort of illusion arises, as if the ‘thing itself were worthy of existing.’ As to the reredos, that is not a work in which religion is at all involved; there is in it no question of a cult, but only of a craze; it is a common exhibition of the draughtsman’s pattern and the carver’s knack, and so entirely destitute of real art. The Bishop might with ample reason ask the Dean and Chapter by what right they thus degrade an ancient church, belonging to the nation, and entrusted to their care. In answer they would probably admit their ignorance of art, which is so very obvious, and say that they had trusted to an ‘architect of ‘eminence.’ This has gone on for centuries; and while each Chapter sees the folly of its predecessors, none perceive that ‘the profession’ has no eminence at all, but only various profundities of evil. Yet though the members of the modern architectural profession are not artists, nor ‘acute in ‘workmanship,’ they have a shrewd appreciation of the artistic ignorance of their customers. This is the drawing-master’s real eminence and practical superiority; he does know something; and, of course, among the blind the one-eyed man is king.

The public and the clergy have been taught that art is sensuous, and that in some way sensuousness may help to glorify and to advance religious truth. But art, like any other work of mind, is sensuous only in its means: its essence is its ideality. A manufactured picture is by men of sense accepted as a manufacture only, since the true artist's hand and inspiration are not there; but to the inartistic and uncultivated mind the sensuous element is all-sufficient, and this contemptible and lifeless thing it is that ritualist churchmen say will help to lead a sinner up to God, and serves to honour Him.

In this discussion there has been no special reference to theological affairs, and therefore no concern with ritualism, either in its doctrines or its rites; but without any, even mental, bias, it may here be said that ritualist influence has caused the most destructive injury that English art has known. Even the style of work in decoration and church furniture and 'ornaments' that ritualists and their imitators so affect is not true art at all, but only childish sensualism; and their delight in it is something lower than a baby's joy in a wax doll or in the coloured carboys at a chemist's shop. Persons thus influenced have perhaps no want of natural capacity for artistic thought and feeling; but *they eschew all criticism*; and following, like women, the prevailing fashion, they accept the trash that weak and wily connoisseurs and drawing-masters set before them as 'religious art,' and thus have made so many an English chancel, college chapel, and cathedral choir appear as if designed to please the most unworthy, and the most unwise; to be, indeed, a paradise for fools.

Again we venture on an illustration, new, alas! but very open to remark. Of late two 'altars' have been made or decorated at St. Paul's, one in the morning chapel and the other at the east end of the church. Each has a cross and candlesticks, which may be rubrical, or doctrinal, and so we willingly dismiss them. But the eastern 'altar' has a curtain

in the rear, and for a frontal a device in red and gold. These things together give the ‘altar’ very much the look of a magician’s sideboard. On the other ‘altar’ are two bunches of cut flowers in two pots, and it also has a frontal of a foolish pattern or design. What could have been the mental and ‘religious’ state of the Cathedral Chapter when they ordered these two toys, is not within the scope of our remarks. But, clearly separating the cathedral clergy from their accidents of art, these ‘altar’ cloths are exhibitions which associate in strict propriety with hammer-cloths and shoulder-knots. Here is no ‘art as ministering to religion,’ but ‘the trade’ subserving folly, so that ‘the table of the Lord is made ‘contemptible.’ Were words employed as basely as these art-religious utterances, they would be open to rebuke and condemnation, and be called profanity.

Such work, however, is admitted to be fashionable, and it has a suitable effect upon the minds of church officials in their contact with the world. Thus: ‘When I passed by ‘Bennett’s church in the morning, all dressed in my diamonds ‘and flowers, to be drawn by Swinton, the beadle in full ‘costume bowed low to me, taking me for an altarpiece, or ‘something to be reverenced’ (Harriett, Lady Ashburton).

‘Art is religious,’ we are told, ‘because its chosen subjects ‘are of a religious character, and its connection with the Chris- ‘tian faith cannot be disputed.’ Religious symbolism also ‘teaches,’ and is solemnly impressive. But what does it all tend to? Let us see. At Tribsees, in North Germany, the altar is a perfectly developed exhibition of ‘religious’ and symbolic art, and therefore ‘something to be reverenced.’ ‘In the ‘centre the mystery of Transubstantiation is accomplished ‘under the direction of God the Father, who is accompanied ‘by angels as well as by the sun and moon. The Evangelists, ‘who are winged, and furnished with the heads of their sym- ‘bolic animals, are shaking out sacks of meal into a mill- ‘hopper, which is put in motion by the Apostles, who on both

'sides are drawing up sluices. Below, the bread is coming 'out of the flour trough in the form of the Infant Christ: it 'is received in a cup by the four Fathers of the Church, and 'is immediately distributed by the priests, in both forms, to 'the faithful. Above, on one side, we see Adam in the jaws 'of hell; on the other side the Annunciation appears as 'the beginning of the work of redemption; on both sides are 'the eight principal scenes of the Passion; and the whole is 'crowned by half-length figures of twelve Prophets. The 'artistic merit of the work is small, but the whole is valuable 'as a splendid work of mysticism of the fifteenth century' (Lübke, 'History of Sculpture').

Again, at Frankfort, 'I had long believed myself the only 'inmate of the church; suddenly, in a side chapel, I observe a 'charming young girl kneeling and praying devoutly before the 'picture of a saint. I could not make out the picture, it hung 'too obliquely for me, but the girl moved her little head so 'gracefully towards it, she gave the saint such confiding glances 'from her languishing blue eyes, that I began to have a great 'opinion of this saint. Greater and greater became my desire 'to see the picture which could make so fine an impression; 'what a masterpiece it must be! The maiden looked more 'and more inspired. I would not move from the spot where 'I was lest I should disturb her in her devotions. At length 'she stands up, takes a consecrated candle, lights it before 'the picture, makes a humble courtesy, crosses herself and 'vanishes from the church. I sprang from my retreat and 'stood before the picture. I felt myself grow red with vexation. 'The picture shows how the skin of St. Bartholomew was 'drawn over his ears; the executioners who perform the job 'are just pausing to sharpen their knives. One holds his in 'his mouth and pulls with both hands. . . . And yet some 'say that art does not further devotion' (W. Von Kaulbach).

For several years a large and an increasing section of the religious world has been induced to think that art in some

way could be made subservient to religion and to the Church. This was one error, and in following it they have been led into a second, still more grievous. They have mistaken a dull manufacturing ‘ Profession ’ for the noble art which they supposed they had in due subjection. The difference between the two seems great enough to warn the commonly intelligent. Art is beneficent and generous and true, a fit associate for those who worship the great Author of all good; but the ‘ Profession ’ is a selfish and maleficent pretender. It adroitly takes the ‘ handmaid’s ’ place, and serves the Church with seeming deference and much appearance of devotion ; but as it gradually shows itself attractive to the sensual world, [it is esteemed essential to the Church, and undiscerning churchmen yield authority, and what is called position, to an imitative trade.

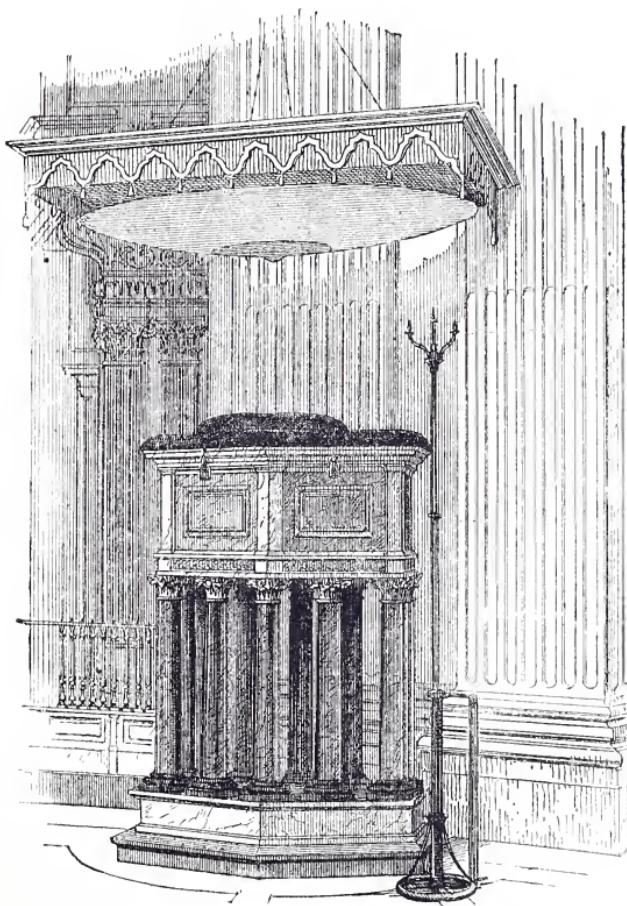
The system is an inartistic make-believe, resulting from the degradation of the noblest class in the community, the men who, in a healthy state of things, would be both poets and producers. But the social crime entails appropriate retribution. Those who have heedlessly combined to practise this oppression have themselves become the victims of their own presumptuous folly. No sight under heaven is more painfully absurd than a high celebrant, in ritual vestments, and surrounded by his ceremonial properties. Our ritualistic clergy think the show æsthetic and devotional, and so perhaps do many of the feeble-minded lookers-on. But these ideas will shortly have an end ; and in a few years’ time no men will look more sheepish than these confident and misled priests, when they are wickedly reminded of the ‘ beautiful ’ upholstery which makes them now ‘ religiously ’ admired.

When, possibly a generation hence, some new historian of art has written his account of the Victorian age, no chapter will appear so paradoxical and free from probability as that which tells of clerical development in architectural affairs. That a society of cultivated gentlemen, of whom we all are proud, whose early manhood has been spent among the works

of ancient art, whose life is dedicated to religion and humanity, should be bewitched by a poor, fleeting fashion, that dishonours God by carefully degrading men, will be a curious episode in our artistic history. The churches that have been 'religiously' designed by the 'Profession' during the last thirty years are ghastly imitations, true perhaps in style and in material, but in art a stultifying manufacture, made especially to please; and then professionally palmed upon the clergy, and received as elevating and 'religious' truth.

'Religious art' is essentially external; but 'the order of religious life is from within to that which is without.' Religion is not founded on appearances, nor are its demonstrations those of outward and material show. It does not become visible by priestly exaltation or in rubrical display, but by that sentiment abounding among men which causes 'each to esteem other better than themselves.' The glory of the Church and its beneficent commission are to 'undo the heavy burdens, to break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free.' The working men of England need such mental liberation, and the foremost to demand it for them ought to be the Church, for which our workmen's predecessors raised those 'sacred' buildings which are still the pride of Christendom, the glory of our land. When this is undertaken, all the eloquence of modern churchmen about 'art as ministering to religion' will spontaneously cease. The clergy will remember that the Founder of their church and their religion was 'as he that serveth; ' that He came, 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister; ' and then, discerning that the excellency of Christianity is in its own loving servitude, they will abandon the idea that 'art' can ever be 'the handmaid of religion,' or that it 'has a ministry to fulfil in the religious life of man.' Their more sensibly directed aim will be to make religion, in its boundless sympathy and wise benevolence, a minister to art. Thus they will cordially recognise the individual working man, and help to gain for him his ancient social dignity and mental

freedom ; so that, restored to reasoning intelligence, to imaginative power, and to artistic self-control, he may again become, as once he was, and always was designed to be, ‘a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master’s service, and ‘prepared unto every good work.’



‘RELIGIOUS ART’ AT ST. PAUL’S.

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